

Studies in Sanskrit and Indian Culture in Thailand



TYA VRAT SHASTRI

ABOUT THE BOOK

The present book comprises five studies, the first three for the first time, on aspects of Sanskrit and Indian culture in Thailand by Professor Satya Vrat Shastri who spent a little over two years in that country as Visiting Professor of Indian Studies and who had an opportunity to see things for himself. A large corpus of Sanskritic words in Thai language, the presence of a good many Sanskrit inscriptions, the existence of a community styling itself Brahmin, the presence of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in literature and art and temple carvings on Indian myths are some of the highlights of the close cultural links that bind India and Thailand together. The present work presents a systematic study of them, marked by depth and sensitivity.

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**STUDIES IN
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**STUDIES IN SANSKRIT
AND
INDIAN CULTURE
IN THAILAND**

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Dedicated to
One of my most brilliant pupils
Her Royal Highness
Mahachakri
SIRINDHORN
Princess of Thailand
Who studied Sanskrit with me
for the Post-Graduate Degree

P R E F A C E

The two neighbouring countries, Thailand and India are bound by intimate age-old ties. How they came so close to each other is still a mystery. Successive waves of merchants travelling by Indian ships bound for ports in Suvarṇabhūmi which in all likelihood included the Śyāmadeśa or Siam, as Thailand was known then, might have settled down there, being accepted by the local people as Khaeks, guests, a term which is used for Indians by them even now. Along with the merchants might have also come the priests and the hermits, the Ṛṣi-s, Thai Rasī-s and Tāpasa-s, Thai Dāba-s, a fact born out by a good number of figures of Ṛṣi-s in stone, found in Thailand, the figures remarkably similar to those in India with matted hair, long beard and crosslegged posture. There are a couple of shrines in Thailand, now in ruins, which carry with them the appellation of Ṛṣi like Kuṭi Ṛṣi, pronounced now as Ku Lisī, Tham Rasī and so on. Deep in the interior of Thailand they are a forceful reminder of the role played by the Ṛṣi-s, the religious leaders, from India in times of yore.

The entire landscape of Thailand is studded with remains from India. Every sphere of its life has some influence of it or the other. The writer of these lines got an opportunity to see something of this during his stay in Thailand for a period of two years consequent upon his appointment as Visiting Professor of Indian Studies in the Chulalongkorn University and the Silpakorn University, Bangkok under the aegis of the I.C.C.R. Work on the two projects : 'A Study of the Sanskrit Inscriptions of Thailand', and the 'Hindu Temples of Thailand' took him to its farthest corners giving him a feel of things much more intimate and close than could have been possible otherwise. A part of what he observed is reproduced in the

present work. Through this he is attempting to share his experiences, of course only in part, with fellow scholars.

Thailand stands unique in being a meeting place of the two of the world's greatest cultures. From the physical features, the language structure and so on Thais are nearer China. From the point of religion, culture and vocabulary Thais are nearer India.

The principle of co-existence is embedded in Thai life. Even the most contrary things blend here in a harmonious whole. The best example of this is the Thai religion itself. It has a three-tier system : Buddhism at the top, Hinduism in the middle and Animism at the base. Of these, Animism and Buddhism are from India. The mix-up of these and Animism in Thai social fabric is so total that it is difficult to separate the one from the other.

The writer of these lines could notice the Indian influence to be much more marked in the south of Thailand along the port town of Chaiya or Nakhon Si Thammarat or Phuttalung and in the provinces of Buriram, Si Saket, Roi Et and so on bordering Compuchea. He could not escape the impression that Hinduism and Indian Culture entered Thailand both from India direct and also through the Khmers. The Thais in the northeast, particularly the older ones among them, both men and women, still wear Indian style Dhoti. The writer of these lines saw a unique spectacle of two young boys wearing five tufts on their heads, the five Kākapakṣas, a spectacle rare even in India, at the Si Saket Railway Station while on a visit to that place. The spectacle remains with him as his life time memory.

In the course of his travels in Thailand, the writer of these lines was invariably accompanied by Dr. Chirapat Prapandvidya, his colleague in Silpakorn University and his friend, philosopher and guide. The writer is greatly indebted to him.

In the Chulalongkorn University, Department of Eastern Languages, the writer had his table just by the side of that of Prof. Visudh Busyakul, the then Head of the Department and acknowledgedly the doyen of Sanskritists of Thailand. He had prolonged talks with him particularly with regard to

Sanskritic content in Thai. The write-up on Sanskrit in Thailand owes much to these useful and informative talks.

Out of the seven different write-ups included in the book, the one : 'Indo-Thai Relations – Cultural Affinities' was published under the title : 'Indo-Thai Relations – Cultural Perspective' in the *Indian and Foreign Review*, New Delhi, Vol. XVI, No. 17, July 1-140, 1979. It was reproduced later in Thai translation in the *Journal of the Thai Bharat Cultural Lodge*, Bangkok. The second write-up : 'Sanskrit in Thailand' was published in the *Indologica Taurinensia*, Torino, Italy, Vol. V, 1977. The writer is obliged to its Editor for allowing him to reproduce it in this book. He also is grateful to His Excellency Sri K.L. Dalal, the then Ambassador of India in Thailand, for his appreciation of it. In his letter dated February 11, 1980 His Excellency wrote :

"I have separately received 15 off-prints of the article 'Sanskrit in Thailand'. It makes wonderful reading and I am utilising it for presentation to high dignitaries in Thailand interested in the subject. I am also awaiting additional 50 off-prints from Italy as mentioned in your letter and we shall use them for wider circulation. I have myself read it with great enlightenment. I should like to congratulate you for such a deep and original study of influence of Sanskrit on Thai language."

The third write-up : 'Sanskrit Inscriptions of Thailand-A Literary Appraisal' forms much enlarged version of the paper 'Poetry in Sanskrit Inscriptions of Thailand' presented at the Seminar on the Influence of Pali and Sanskrit on Thai' held in Chiangmai, Thailand, in October, 1979.

The fourth write-up : 'The Rāmāyṇa in Thailand' forms the script of the Dr. A.D. Pusalkar Memorial Lecture delivered in the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay on September 25, 1981.

The fifth write-up : 'Brahmins in Thailand' forms the script of the paper presented at the XIV Congress, International Association of the History of Religions, held in Winnipeg, Canada in August, 1980.

The sixth write-up : 'Panom Rung Shrine of Thailand'

was published in the *Recent Studies in Sanskrit and Indology* (Professor Jagannath Agrawal Felicitation Volume) and is being reproduced here with the kind permission of the Editor.

All these write-ups are being put together here in the form of a book to give the readers a coherent picture of the influence of Sanskrit and Indian Culture in Thailand. The motivation for this all through has been to emphasize the cultural closeness between the two great neighbours the realization of which could possibly help them come still closer to each other. In the world torn with strife and riven with dissensions, it is a treat to see the two nations, sharing common heritage, common traditions, common beliefs, common customs, though racially and linguistically distinct.

Before concluding, it is pertinent to point out that relations between nations, however close, need constant fostering care like tender flowers. Emphasizing the closeness that already exists could also be one of the means for achieving further improvement in them. And that is what precisely is sought to be achieved through this book.

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20 July, 1982

CONTENTS

1. Preface	vii
2. Introduction	
India and Thailand — Cultural Affinities	1
3. Sanskrit in Thailand	7
4. Sanskrit Inscriptions of Thailand	29
5. Rāmāyaṇa in Thailand	53
6. Brahmins in Thailand	81
7. Panom Rung Shrine of Thailand	89
8. City of Lopburi	103

INTRODUCTION

INDIA AND THAILAND —CULTURAL AFFINITIES

A neighbouring country Thailand has intimate religious, linguistic and cultural ties with India that go back to hoary past. Emperor Aśoka is said to have sent two of his emissaries here, the monks Sona and Uttara as part of his mission to propagate Buddhism in countries far and near. They are believed to have introduced Buddhism into Thailand. They are said to have landed at Nakhom Pathom, Nagara Prathama, the First City, so called perhaps to commemorate that event and delivered their first sermon at a site where a Chedi now stands as a memorial. Tradition has it that at the very first sermon the monks converted a few thousand people from among the 20,000 present to Buddhism. The Purāṇas mention Indian ships laden with merchandize touching the ports in Suvarṇabhūmi which in all likelihood included Śyāmadeśa, Siam, as Thailand was known then. Due to contact with the Khmers who were highly Hinduised people and the Indian immigrants the Hindu religion as well as the Sanskrit language found their way into Thailand. So profound was the impact of both that much of that is noticeable even now. Quite a large part of the vocabulary of Thai is Sanskritic. As for religion, the two most powerful worldreligions, Buddhism and Hinduism, are from India. Of these the former one is live in Thailand and vigorously practised while the latter, though extinct now, has left many traces on its social and cultural life. As a matter of

fact, the whole pantheon of gods and goddesses and the horde of semi-divine beings like the Yakṣas, Kinnaras, Gandharvas, etc., is Hindu in origin. The same can be said with regard to the vehicles of the different gods and goddesses such as Haṇsa, Garuḍa, Airāvata and so on. The very words for gods and goddesses are Sanskrit in origin: *theva*, *thevī*, *thevadā*, Sanskrit *deva*, *devī* and *devatā*. There is nothing like the Hindu Saṃskāras now in Thai life, but as religious rites three are known here: Nāmakorn, Nāmakaraṇa, naming or christening; Vivāha or Vivāhamoṅkhon Vivahamaṅgala or Moṅkhon somrot, Maṅgala samarasa for marriage; and Jhāpaṇakiccā, a Pali word, Sanskrit Kṣapaṇakṛtya for Antyeṣṭi, last rites. For the four stages of life or Āśramas there are words for at least two in Thai, Phrommachan, Brahmacharya, and Gṛhat, Gṛhastha. There are no words for Vānaprastha and Saṃnyāsa in Thai. Among the festivals there are at least two, Soṅkrān and Loi Krathong, which have prominent Indian overtones. Both of them on account of the characteristics respectively of throwing of water on all, known or unknown, and the offerings to water are similar to Holi and the Ganga Pujan in India, the local variations being the lack of colour in water as also artistic Krathongs in place of the plain cups of leaves.

Thailand shares with India the traditional respect for teacher, Khru, Sanskrit Guru or Achan, Sanskrit Acharya, and the elders. The Bhikkhus in saffron are venerated highly in Thailand much the same way the Sadhus in that robe are in India. It is interesting that the Thai language has all the Sanskrit words for the holy people: Rasī, Sanskrit Rṣi, a seer; Muni, Sanskrit the same; Dāba, Sanskrit Tāpasa, a hermit. The form of greeting with the folding of hands is exactly the same as in India. The term for greeting,

Sawaddī is Sanskrit Svasti. The two national epics of India, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, particularly the former, are all too well known in Thailand. As a matter of fact, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, called the *Rāmakien*, the glory of Rāma, in Thailand is woven inextricably into the Thai social fabric.

The laws of Thailand are called Dhammasattha, Pali form of Sanskrit Dharmaśāstra. The influence of the work of Manu, the primeval law-giver in India is found in Dhammasattha not only in the name but also in the basic purpose of the duties of a monarch. *It is interesting to note that Manu headings appear in Thai texts on law.*

The greatest living link of Thailand with India is Buddhism and Pali language the study of which is pursued in hundreds of Wats all over the country. The recitation from the Sacred Canon in them appear all too familiar to an Indian ear.

From what has been said above it would be clear that the relationship between Thailand and India rests on age-old ties which are deep, profound and abiding. An event of immense importance to Indo-Thai cultural relations in the recent past was the visit to Thailand of one of India's greatest poets and thinkers Rabindranath Tagore in 1927. The poet was thrilled to notice the tremendous impact of Indian culture on Thailand and exclaimed :

I come a pilgrim, at thy gate O Siam,
To offer my verse to the endless glory of India,
Sheltered in thy home,
Away from her own deserted shrine,
To bathe in the living stream that flows in thy heart.
Whose water descends from the snowy,

Height of a sacred time on which arose,
 From the deep of my country's being,
 The Son of Love and Righteousness.

(From a monograph *On Siam*, with the Thai Bharat Cultural Lodge, Bangkok).

A new filip was given to Indo-Thai ties with the founding of the association Dharmashrama in 1930, developed ten years later in 1940 into the Thai Bharat Cultural Lodge by a man in suffron robes, a Graduate in Philosophy and Sanskrit of the Calcutta and Banaras Hindu Universities who came to Thailand in 1932 at the instance of Tagore. The man in suffron Swami Satyanand Puri, known earlier as P.K. Sen, set about his work in right earnest. He learnt Thai in an incredibly short period. Attached to the Chulalongkorn University as Professor of Sanskrit, he wrote many books and articles in Thai and English whereby he sought to interpret each country to the other. There have been few individuals who have done so much in the field of Indo-Thai cultural relationship as did Swami Satyanand Puri. The Thai Bharat Cultural Lodge is a monument to his innate passion for bringing the two neighbours, Thailand and India, nearest to each other and to the development of better understanding of each other. The Swami realized that the relations between the nations, like tender flowers, need constant care and nourishment, that the people in them have to strive continuously to improve them and not just hearken the past to emphasize the closeness and that there is no resting on oars. The Lodge is the principal instrument the Swami created to translate this realization into practice. Needless to say the instrument has worked. This association of Thais and Indians has gone on well and sought to foster an emotional kinship between the people of the two countries by its multifarious activities. It has organized talks on Indian and

Thai subjects by eminent scholars of both countries, offered scholarships and stipends to Thai students for study in India and celebrated important national festivals of both the countries. It is running a good library also which is dedicated to the memory of Swami Satyanand Puri and is named after him. Run by a band of devoted workers, the Lodge has drawn up ambitious plans which include the invitation of a scholar from India to study Thai language and culture.

Being the land of the Buddha, people in Thailand have naturally a soft corner in their hearts for India. Like Mecca for Muslims, the Buddhist holy places in India such as Gaya, Sarnath, Sanchi and so on are for Thais. They dream of visiting them some time in their life to achieve a kind of fulfilment.

Quite a few of the Thais, both monks and laymen, have studied or are studying in institutions of higher learning in India. Having spent years there they have developed a kind of attachment to it. They remember wistfully the time they spent there, the friendships and the acquaintances that they developed and the contacts that they established. Similarly there is a sizable number of Indians who have spent some period or the other of their life in Thailand. They feel deeply attached to it. These Thais and Indians form a kind of reservoir of Indo-Thai goodwill. This reservoir can usefully be drawn upon to further cement the ties between the two countries. It is not only the upper crust of the educated Thais and Indians, even the men in the streets in both the countries that need to be helped to develop the understanding as to how much in common they have with each other. The relationship between the two countries would then be taken out of the plane of religious affinity or individual attachment and put on a more stable footing of better appreciation of each

other. It is to this task that all those who have love for Thailand and India in their hearts have to address themselves.

A new chapter in the relationship between Thailand and India was added with the signing of a Cultural Agreement between them on April 29, 1977. An operative instrument for the age-old cultural affinity between the two, its vigorous implementation can lead to immense mutual benefit.

SANSKRIT IN THAILAND

One of the most ancient languages of the world Sanskrit has exercised considerable influence on Thai. According to Dr. William J. Gedney¹, 'words of Indic origin are about as common in spoken Thai as are words of Greek and Latin in spoken English'. This is remarkable in view of the fact that Thai is structurally entirely different from Sanskrit. It is coupled with Chinese in view of the two vital characteristics that it shares with it, the monosyllabism and the tone-variation. How then Thai could come to acquire such an enormous corpus of Sanskrit words is, therefore, one of the biggest riddles of linguistic history. Whether Sanskrit entered into this land through Pali which came with the introduction of Buddhism or independently is debatable. Evidences are not lacking in Thai even of the influence of Sanskrit over Pali. One of the most interesting instances of this is the Thai word *pracakṣa*, direct perception. The Sanskrit form of this is *pratyakṣa* and the Pali form *paccakkha*. Now, if Thai *pracakṣa* were derived from Pali *paccakkha*, its Sanskritization in Thai would have to be accepted, for the forms *pra* and *cakṣa* would not go well with Pali genius. So would not do the appearance of *r* in *akhra*, Sanskrit *agra*, *marga*, Sanskrit *mārga* which in Pali is assimilated to the following sound : *agga*, *magga*. All this would lead us to the

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1. Gedney William J., *Indic Loan Words in Spoken Thai*. (Yale University, Ph.D. Dissertation), Introduction p.I. Ann Arbor : University Microfilms, 1947.

conclusion that Sanskrit was not always on the sidelines in Thailand, nor was it Pali's close follower. It is not only the new coinages like *sawad dī* from Sanskrit *savasti* for *namaste* or the like (the term for greeting), *Thanākhān* for bank (Sanskrit *Dhanāgāra*), *Praisani* for Post Office (Sanskrit *Praisaṇī*), *Thora-lekh* for telegram (Sanskrit *Dūralekha*), *Prapā* for water works, *Sathānī-Vitthayu* (Sanskrit *Vidyutsthāna*) for Radio-Station, even quite a few of the older words have a Sanskrit ring about them. It is a tribute to the Thai power of assimilation that they have been naturalized in it, given Thai pronunciation, Thai spelling and occasionally even Thai meaning (e.g., *karuṇā* in the sense of 'please' or *kṛpayā* as against its Sanskrit sense of 'compassion', *prārthanā* 'desire' as against its Sanskrit sense of 'request', 'prayer', *saṃjñā* pronounced in Thai as *sañña* 'promise' as against its Sanskrit sense of 'consciousness' or 'appellation' and so on). They might have once belonged to Sanskrit stock, they are now Thai words, an inseparable part of Thai vocabulary. Most of the Thais may be least conscious of the fact that the names that they have, such as Pridi (Prīti), Hongkul (Haṃsakula), Visudh (Viśuddha), Praphod (Prabodha) Vinaya, Prasit (Prasiddha), Mahanond (Mahānanda), Syamananda, Chirayu, Valaya, Manjari, Kalyani are all from Sanskrit. To them they are Thai names of which they are legitimately proud.

As with the names of the human beings, so with the names of the cities, towns, provinces and so on. They too have a Sanskrit ring about them. Behind the crust of their phonetic variation, their Sanskrit form peeps out. By way of illustration we take up the following :

Thai	Sanskrit
Ayutthayā	Ayodhyā
Buriram	Purīramyā

Chanthaburī	Candrapurī
Chayanāt	Jayanāda
Chayaphūm	Jayabhūmi
Chonburī	Jalapurī
Kālasindhū	Kālasindhū
Kanchanaburī	Kāñcanapurī
Lopburī	Lavapurī
Nakhon Rāṭchasīmā	Nagararājasīmā
Nakhon Pathom	Nagaraprathama
Nakhon sī Thammarāṭ	Nagaraśrī Dharmarāja
Nakhon Nāyok	Nagaranāyaka
Nakhoh Sawan	Nagarasvarga
Nonthaburī	Nandapurī
Mahāsarakhām	Mohasāragrāma
Mukdāhān	Muktāhāra
Phetchaburī	Vajrapurī
Phitsnulok	Viṣṇuloka
Prāchīnburī	Prācīnapurī
Rājburī	Rājapurī
Sakon nakhon	Sakalanagara
Samut prākān	Samudraprākāra
Samut soṅkrām	Samudrasaṅgrāma
Siṁhaburī	Siṁhapurī
Sukhothāi	Sukhodaya
Surāṭthānī	Surāṣṭradhānī
Surin	Surendrapurī
Sawankhalok	Svargaloka
U Bon	Utpala
Udon Thānī	Uttaradhānī
Uttaradit	Uttaratīrtha
Yasothon	Yasodhara

For a province the Thai word is Prathet, Sanskrit *pradeśa*.
One of the provinces of Thailand bordering Cambodia and

very much in news these days is Aranyaprathet or Aranyapradeśa.

The origin of the name Cakrī, the present ruling dynasty of Thailand, is quite interesting, nay revealing, as it shows the profound impact of Sanskrit on it. Cakrī is derived from *cakra* pronounced in Thai as *cak*.

The subjects in the kingdom are known as *prachā chon*, Sanskrit *prajājana*. The different parts of the country are called *phāk*, Sanskrit *bhāga*. A province is known as *caivāt*, of which *vāt*, *vāta*, is Sanskrit. The word for countryside is *chonmabod*, Sanskrit *janapada*. The field or farm is *kaset*, Sanskrit *kṣetra*, the seed sown is *phued*, Sanskrit *bīja*. Agriculture is *kasetkam*, Sanskrit *kṣetrakarma*. As per the practice in Thailand the king himself ceremonially ploughs a small piece of land. This formally opens the sowing operation. The people follow it up in their fields. The ceremony is called *phiti charot pra naṅkhan*, Sanskrit *vidhi caraṇa* (?) *pra* (?) *lāṅgala*. *Naṅkhan* is *lāṅgala*. *Vidhi—lāṅgala*, the ceremony of handling the plough. Civil service is called *rājakān*, Sanskrit *rājākārya* and a civil servant *kha...rājakān*, *kha...rājākārya*. The word for municipal administration is *thesabān*, Sanskrit *deśapāta* and the one in charge of it is called *thesamantrī*, Sanskrit *deśamantrī*; in big cities *phū vā rājakān phū vā rājākara*. A minister in the Central Cabinet is called *ratha-mantrī*, Sanskrit *rāṣṭramantrī*. The Prime Minister is *nāyok rathamantṛī*, Sanskrit *nāyaka rāṣṭramantrī*, the foreign minister *rathamantṛī tān prathet*, Sanskrit *tāṅg¹ pradeśa rāṣṭramantrī*, minister of the Interior *mahat-Thai*, Sanskrit *mahā Thai*, the Director of education *siksādhikān*, Sanskrit *Śikṣādhikāra*, the Director of Broadcasting *adhibodi krom prachā, samphān*, Sanskrit *adhipati karma prajā sambandha*. The Parliament is *ratha-sabhā*, Sanskrit

1. A Thai word.

rāṣṭrasabhā and the Cabinet *khana ratha mantrī*, Sanskrit *gaṇa-rāṣṭramantri*. The Secretariat is called *lekhādhikānī khanaratha-mantrī*, Sanskrit *lekhādhikāragāṇarāṣṭramantrī*.

The word for road in Thai is *thanon*, Sanskrit *sthāna*, for a footpath, *pādavīthi*, Sanskrit the same, for station *sathānī* Sanskrit *sthāna* (Bus Stand : *sathānī rod* (Skt. *ratha*) may; Rail-way Station : *sathānī rod* (Skt. *ratha*) fay). A hall is *sālā*, Sanskrit *śālā*, a door is *thavān*, Sanskrit *dvāra*, an arch *toron*, Sanskrit *toraṇa*, a palace *prasād*, Sanskrit *prāsāda*¹, a pavillion, *vedī*, Sanskrit the same.

The word for enemy in Thai is *satru* which is pure Sanskrit except for the dentalization, not uncommon in India itself of the Sanskrit palatal.² The word for friend is *mit*, Sanskrit *mitra* or *sahāy*, Sanskrit *sahāya* (there is slight semantic variation here, in Sanskrit the word means a companion) or *mit sahāy*, Sanskrit *mitra sahāya*. Battle or war in Thai is called *samon*, which is Sanskrit *samara*. So is *samonbūm*, battlefield, from Sanskrit *samarabhūmi*. The word for weapon in Thai is *āvut* which is from Sanskrit *āyudha*.

The names of a number of trees, plants and flowers in Thai are Sanskritic. Thus Bikun in Thai is Sanskrit Bakula; Paduma Sanskrit Padma, Kokonadu Sanskrit Kokanada Komud; Sanskrit Kumuda, Phutsa Sanskrit Badara, Mālī Sanskrit Mālātī or Mallikā, Chomphū, Sanskrit Jambū, Tāla Sanskrit the same and so on. For fruit Thai has *phon* (*tamai*) of which *phon* is

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1. The Grand Palace is called Phra Borom Mahārājavoṅg of which phra and voṅg are Thai while Borom and Mahārāja are Sanskritic. *Borom* is *parama*, *Mahārāja* is *Mahārāja*.
 2. Due to pronunciation vagaries *ś* is often pronounced as *s* by some people in India.

Sanskrit *phala* itself. The fruit of an action is also called *phala* or *karmaphala* in Sanskrit. So is it in Thai, *phon la¹ kam*, *phala-karma* or *karma-phala*. The word for tree in Thai is *tonmai*. *Ton* is Sanskrit *taru*.

The names of the months in Thai have also Sanskrit origin. But unlike Sanskrit they are based on the names of the signs of the Zodiac or Rāsis. Quite scientific the Thais follow a definite system in the naming of the months: the names of the months with 31 days end in the word *ākhom*, Sanskrit *āgama*; those with 30 days in *āyon* Sanskrit *āyana* and the one (obviously February) with less than 30 days ends in *phan*, Sanskrit *bandha*. The Thai names for the months, thus, are :

Thai	Sanskrit	English
Mesāyon	Meṣāyana	April
Phṛsaphākhom	Vṛṣabhāgama	May
Mithunāyon	Mithunāyana	June
Karakadākhom	Karkaṭāgama	July
Siṁhākhom	Siṁhāgama	August
Kanyāyon	Kanyāyana	September
Tulākhom	Tulāgama	October
Phṛścikāyon	Vṛścikāyana	November
Dhanvākhom	Dhanvāgama	December
Makarākhom	Makarāgama	January
Kumphāphan	Kumbhabandha	February
Mīnākhom	Mīnāgama	March

Besides these general names, some of the months may have in Thai some special names based on some special events, e.g., Visākhavūchā Sanskrit Viśākhapūjā, for the month Lord Buddha was born, got enlightenment and attained Parinirvāṇa. Similarly the month the Buddhist monks start the rainy-season-prayers is called Ā-sā-la-ha in Thai, Āsālpūjā in Pali and Āṣāḍhapūjā in Sanskrit.

1. This does not have an independent meaning. It is indicative of compounding.

For season the Thais have *ṛdu*, a derivative of Sanskrit *ṛtu*, for time *velā*, for watch *nāḍī*, both of them the same as in Sanskrit. No word in Thai is found for any particular season. It is only in the name of the dish, *Krayāsāt*, however, that the name of the season *śarad*, autumn, peeps out. *sāt—śarad*.

The name of the days too have Sanskritic origin. As against the Sanskrit practice of adding the word *vāra* or *vāsara* signifying day after the names of some planets, Thai has the word *van* (= day) preceding them :

Thai	Sanskrit	English
Van-ādit	āditavāra	Sunday
Van-can	candravāra	Monday
Van-añkhān	aṅgāravāra	Tuesday
Van-phut	budhavāra	Wednesday
Van-phṛhatsabody	bṛhaspativāra	Thursday
Van-suk	śukravāra	Friday
Van-sao	śanivāra	Saturday

It is noteworthy that Thai has rather less known word *añkhān* (Sanskrit *aṅgāra*) for Mars or Maṅgala, generally found in treatises on Astronomy or Astrology or here and there in older literature.

While talking of the names of the days, etc., it is interesting to note that the Thai word for calender is *Pratidinam*, a typical Sanskrit word.

The names of quarters in Thai are all from Sanskrit. The intermediate space in the quarters in Sanskrit is identified with certain deities like Rudra, Agni, etc., and is named after them. So is it in Thai. Below is being reproduced a chart giving the names of the quarters and their intermediary points in Thai together with Sanskrit originals and English equivalents to help form a clear idea of the influence that Sanskrit has exercised:

	Udorn	
	Uttara	
	North	
Phāyap		Isān
Vāyavya		Īsāna
North West		North East
Pracim		Būrafā
Paścima		Pūrva
West		East
Hawradi		Ākhane
Nairṛti		Āgneya
South West		South East
	Thaksin	
	Dakṣiṇa	
	South	

Thai has words for all the four Varṇas, castes, which are the same as in Sanskrit except for certain phonetic variations and certain semantic peculiarities. Brāhmaṇa is called Phrām, Kṣatriya Kasat, Vaiśya Phait and Śūdra Sūd, in Thai.¹ Of these Phait and Sūd are of academic interest only, being no longer in use in popular speech. The dictionaries list them and give their meaning as people belonging to the merchant class and menials and slaves in India, respectively. The word for merchants current in popular speech in Thai is Vānit which is the changed form of Sanskrit Vāṇij. Evidently, it is a case of phonetic variation here. Apiece with it is Thai Kasat from Sanskrit Kṣatriya, as noticed above, especially Mahākasat someone belonging to the warrior class, in Sanskrit. Maybe this Kasat is a derivative of Kṣatra and not Kṣatriya.

1. Together with Śramaṇa the word would be Saman-Phrām, Śramaṇa-Brāhmaṇa, unlike Sanskrit where Brāhmaṇa comes first : Brāhmaṇa-Śramaṇa.

The concept of the four stages, Āśramas, in the life of a person is not altogether unknown to Thailand where words for at least two stages, Brahmacharya and Gṛhastha do exist. Brahmacharya is called *Phrommachan* which means abstinence from sex. It is not unoften used with *praphṛt*, Sanskrit *prayṛtti* practice : *Praphṛt phrommachan* = practice of Brahmacharya. Gṛhastha is called *Gṛhat*, a householder. There are no words for Vānaprastha and Saṁnyāsa in Thai.

The word Brahmachārīn signifies in Sanskrit a young man practising continence. The Thai derivative of it, Phrommacārī, however, signifies a virgin girl.¹

Saṁskāras as religious rites are unknown to Thailand. As ceremonies, however, three of them are known and they have Sanskritic words : Nāmakorn, Sanskrit Nāmakaraṇa, Vivāha and Antyeṣṭi called Jhāpaṇa-kiccā, Sanskrit Kṣapaṇa-kṛtya, burning of the body. For Vivāha or marriage Thai has four words : of which three, except Ṭangan, are Sanskritic: one Vivāha itself, two, Moṅkhon somrot, Maṅgala samarasa and three, Vivāhamoṅkhon, Vivāha maṅgala.

Though a Buddhist country, Thailand, has words for Brahmanic gods and goddesses ; having come under the pale of cultural influence of India. The Sanskrit words for a god and a goddess in general are *deva* and *devī* which are pronounced in Thai as *theva* and *thevī*, respectively. Of the Brahmanic gods the most worshipped in Thailand is Phrom, Brahmā whose

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1. In good old days a preparation of rice, coconut milk and sugar called Krayāsāt was distributed among the monks, relatives and neighbours in the month of Bhādrapada. It was to be stirred, as per the custom, interestingly enough by the Phrommacārīs, Brahmachārī (nī)s, virgin girls. The word Krayā in Krayāsāt, it may in passing be pointed out, is of Cambodian origin.

temples are a common sight everywhere. The other gods known to Thais though not actually worshipped now, are Indra together with his divine vehicle Airāvaṇa whose figures in certain Wats or Vihāras do meet the eye, Rāma, Sītā and Hanu-mān whose representations in frescos are not uncommon and Yama, the god of Death who is supposed to take away life from and give it to the people at the appointed hour. There is belief in semi-divine beings, the Yakṣas, etc., too, huge figures of whom adorn some monasteries. There is belief also in certain objects, like the trees, having the presiding deities. The Thais call it Rukkhatheva which is Sanskrit Vṛkṣadeva. Some of the Brahmanic gods, though not worshipped, are not the less known to Thailand. A few of its prominent institutions have figures of them. The building of the Arts Faculty of the Chulalongkorn University carries the figure of Sarasvatī, Saraswadī, at its top. The Kromsilpakorn the Department of Fine Arts of the Govt. of Thailand and the Silpakorn University, have the figure of Khanesa, Gaṇeśa, on their emblem. The National Theatre run by the Kromsilpakorn also has a big figure of Khanesa, Gaṇeśa, on the top of its main entrance. On its both sides it has at the top three figures, those of Narāi, Nārāyaṇa (Viṣṇu), Phrom, Brahmā, and Isuan, Īśvara (Śiva).

Along with the gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon Thailand shows familiarity with the pious and the spiritual people like the Ṛṣis, seers, Munis, sages, Tāpasas, hermits. The Thai words for them are only the phonetic, variants of the above : Rasī (Ṛṣi) Muni (Muni) Dāba (Tāpasa).

The names that some of the sciences or disciplines have been given in Thailand could well be the envy of many an Hindi enthusiast even in India, e.g.,

English	Thai	Sanskrit Original
Anthropology	Manusyavidyā	Manuṣyavidyā
Economics	Sethsāt	Śreṣṭhaśāstra
Logic	Takavidyā	Tarkavidyā
Psychology	Cittavidyā	Cittavidyā
Ethics	Cariyāsāt	Caryāśāstra
Humanities	Manusasāt	Manuṣyaśāstra
Sociology	San̄khomvidyā	San̄gamavidyā
Linguistics	Bhāsāsāt	Bhāṣāśāstra
History	Pravattisāt	Pravṛttiśāstra
Political Science	Rathasāt	Rāṣṭraśāstra
Mathematics	Khanitasāt	Gaṇitaśāstra
Philosophy	Prajñā	Prajñā
Zoology	Sattvavidyā	Sattvavidyā
Biology	Jivavidyā	Jīvavidyā
Science of Teaching	Kharusāt	Guruśāstra
	or	or
	Siksāsāt	Śikṣāśāstra
Law	Nītisāt	Nītiśāstra
Ethnology	Chātivanvidyā	Jātivarṇavidyā
Engineering	Vissavakammasāt	Viśvakarmaśāstra
Science of medicine	Phaityasāt	Vaidyaśāstra
Surgery	Sallayasāt	Śalyaśāstra
Pathology	Āyursāt	Āyurśāstra

As may be seen, a particular order is noticeable in the nomenclature. The words which in English end in *logy* are rendered in Thai by the term *vidyā*, while those ending in *ics* by *sāt*, a derivative of Sanskrit *śāstra*.

The institutions of higher learning in Thailand have Sanskrit names. The Colleges are called *Vidyālayas* and the Universities *Mahāvidyālayas*, the words being pronounced as *Vitthayālaya* and *Mahāviththayālaya*, respectively. For school,

however, a typical Thai word, Rong Rien is used. But when it comes to denoting a Primary or Secondary School the words Prathom, Sanskrit Prathama, and Matthayom, Sanskrit Madhyama are preposed to it. Similarly, the words Anupān, Sanskrit Anupāla and Āchīp, Sanskrit Ājīva, are post-positioned to it to denote the Montessory School and the Vocational school, respectively.

The words for some of the University officials are Sanskrit in origin. The Dean is called Khanabody, Sanskrit Gaṇapati and the Rector (Vice-Chancellor) Adhikānbody, Sanskrit Adhikārapati. The Ministry of Education is called Kasuang Siksādhikān of which Siksādhikān is Sanskrit being derived from Sanskrit Śikṣādhikāra,

The terms for the various University degrees in Thailand are also typically Sanskritic. For the Bachelor's degree the term is Baṇḍit, obviously from Sanskrit Paṇḍita and for the Master's degree Mahābaṇḍit, Sanskrit Mahāpaṇḍita. If the idea of B.A. (Bachelor of Arts) is to be denoted it will have to be done by Aksorsāt Baṇḍit, Sanskrit Akṣaraśāstra Paṇḍita. M.A. similarly is called in Thai Aksorsāt Mahābaṇḍit, Sanskrit Akṣaraśāstra Mahāpaṇḍita. For Ph. D. the Thai word is Dussadi Baṇḍit or Tuṣṭi Paṇḍita. For research Thai has easily the most appropriate word *vicai*, Sanskrit *vicaya*, gathering or collecting.¹ At least three Universities in Thailand have Sanskrit names: the Universities of Thammasāt, Sanskrit Dharmaśāstra, Śilpākorn, Sanskrit Śilpākara and Kasersāt, Sanskrit Kṣetraśāstra.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, particularly the *Rāmāyaṇa*, are quite well known in Thailand. There are

1. How we wish such type of words could be adopted in Sanskrit and Hindi in India instead of the lack-lustre words like *śodha* or *anusandhāna*.

mural paintings from it in the Grand Palace and other places. A Thai version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* called in Thai the *Rāmakien* (Sanskrit *Rāmakīrti*) was prepared as early as in 1797 A.D. by king Rama I, the founder of the present Chakri dynasty. The Royal House has contributed much to the translation of Sanskrit works. King Rama VI translated episodes from the *Mahābhārata*, the *Nalopākhyāna* and the *Sāvitrīyupākhyāna* into Thai. The *Sāvitrī* episode was given by him the drama form also. He also translated the *Abhijñānaśākuntala* of Kālidāsa and the *Priyadarśikā* of Śrī Harṣa. Prince Bidiyalongkorn translated some of the stories from the *Vetālapañcaviṃśati*. Among the translations by scholars other than those from the Royal House may be mentioned the translation of the *Bhagavadgītā*, the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, up to the 27th Adhyāya, the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* of Varāhamihira and the episode of the killing of Kāṃsa, the *Kāṃsavadhopākhyāna*, from the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, by Prof. Saeng,¹ the translation of the *Kāvya-lālikā* of Vāgbhaṭa by Sri P. S. Sastri, an Indian immigrant to Thailand, selections from the *Upaniṣads*, by Mr. Rungruing Bunyorasa, the translation of the *Dvātriṃśatputtalikāśiṃhāsana* by Mr. Kila Bardhanabadya, the translation of the dramas *Svapnavāsavadatta* and the *Ratnāvalī* by Mrs. Dussadie Malakun² and selections from works like the *Paddhati* of Śārngadhara, Bhartṛhari's *Śatakatraya*, the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* of D.D. Kosambi, the *Subhāṣitaratnaśāstra* of Vidyākara, the *Subhāṣitāvalī* of Vallabhadeva, and the *Amaruśataka* by Mr. Sthiraphong Varna Pok. Of the present day Sanskritists of Thailand Mr. Karuna Kusalasaya has translated the *Buddha-*

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1. Died a few years ago. Was Professor of Sanskrit in the Silpakorn University and was one of those few Thais who could speak in Sanskrit.
 2. Wife of the late Minister of Education, Mr. Pin Malakun.

carita (Cantos I and II). He is at the moment busy translating the *Mahābhārata*. Prof. Chamlong Sarapadnuke has translated selections from the *Rgveda* under the title *Veda-Saṁhitā*, Parts I and II and the *Bhagavadgītā*. Prof. Likhitanon has translated jointly with Prof. Rungruang selections from the *Upaniṣads*. Her Royal Highness Mahachakri Sirindhorn, the Princess of Thailand, together with Mr. Prapod Assavavirulhakarn has translated in Thai the *Thai-leṣavilāsam*, a poem in Sanskrit by the writer of these lines.

Of the Indian languages it is Sanskrit and Pali which are actively being pursued in Thailand. In all its institutions of higher learning, Universities and Colleges, these are taught in relation to Thai words, especially to those who major in Thai language.

There are two Universities in Thailand which provide for Post-Graduate teaching in Sanskrit: the Chulalongkorn and the Silpakorn. With well-qualified teachers, the Sanskrit wings of their Eastern Languages and Oriental Languages Departments are doing fairly well. Of these Universities too it is the Chulalongkorn which awards the Post-Graduate degree on Sanskrit. The Silpakorn does so in Oriental Epigraphy though its course content covers everything that could come under the Sanskrit degree.

Being a major centre of Sanskrit studies in Thailand, the Department of Eastern Languages of the Chulalongkorn University has produced a good number of researchers who have carried out work on a number of important and interesting subjects some of which such as the *Passive and Causative Verbal System in Epic Sanskrit* are highly intricate requiring a degree of expert knowledge of Sanskrit grammar, considered difficult even in India by all standards, on the part of the researcher. Other topics like the *Cakravartin Kingship* though

not so intricate require a thorough knowledge of the history of the ancient period as also of texts to trace its theory and practice. Some of the topics like the *Indian Wedding Customs in the Vedic Period*, *Heroines of Kālidāsa's Dramas* and *Jester in Kālidāsa's Dramas* are comparatively easy. They also cannot admit of much originality, enough work on them having been done already. Besides the theses on which work has been done, there are as many as fifteen others on which work is in progress. Of these eleven are pure Sanskrit topics ; some of the more interesting of them being : *The Apsaras in Sanskrit Literature*, *Satī in Sanskrit Literature*, *Women's Rights and Duties in Sanskrit Legal Literature*, *Śabdālaṅkāras in the Buddhacarita* and the *Nominal Stem Formations and Compounds in the Nalopākhyāna*. There are at least five topics including the one : *God Indra in Sanskrit, Pali and Thai Literatures* on which a thesis has been produced and degree awarded, which are connected with Sanskrit and Pali both (or with Thai as seen above). They are : *Brahmā in Pali and Sanskrit Literatures*, *Garuḍas and Nāgas in Sanskrit and Pali Literatures*, *The Lotus in the Pali and Sanskrit Literatures* and *Elephants in Sanskrit and Pali Literatures*. Some of these fifteen topics such as the *Śūdras in the Vedic Age*, *Similes in Sanskrit Dramas*, *Childhood Ceremonies in Ancient India*, and *Initiation Ceremony in Ancient India* cannot claim for themselves much originality and could well have been given up in preference to others, more original and thought-provoking. Nonetheless the volume of work being turned out by the Department is substantial enough to attract the appreciative notice of scholars.

Instances are not lacking in the Thai literature, old and new, where Sanskrit literature has been drawn upon for themes. As early as some 400 years back a well known Thai writer Sree Prajna had taken up for treatment in his work the Puranic

theme of the romance of Aniruddha, grandson of Kṛṣṇa and Uṣā, daughter of Bāṇāsura.

Prosody is, however, the field where the influence of Sanskrit is particularly marked. The names of quite a few of the Thai metres are derived from Sanskrit through Pali, e.g., Indravichien from Indravajrā, Indrawong from Indravamśa, Vamśattha from Vamśastha, Upachāt from Upajāti, Vicchum-mala from Vidyunmālā, Saddullavikkīlita from Śārdūlavikrīḍita, Phūchoṅkhaprayāt from Bhujāṅgaprayāta, Saddharā from Sragdharā, and so on. Some of the names of the metres in Thai and Sanskrit differ in only a letter here and there, e.g., Thai Salinī, from Sanskrit Śālinī, Thai Vasantatilok from Sanskrit Vasantatilakā. Occasionally the original Sanskrit word without any phonetic modification is found in such names as Mālinī and Toṭaka. Curiously there are some Thai metres which have Sanskritic names but which, however, are not found in Sanskrit. Such, for instance, are Īdisam, Sanskrit Īdṛśam, Upathitā Sanskrit Upasthitā, Kamalā and Citrapadā. There are five groups of metres in Thai of which the three Klong, Klon and Rai are typically Thai. The rest of the two, Kārb and Chan are Sanskritic in origin. Kārb is from Sanskrit Kāvya and Chan from Sanskrit Chanda or Chandas. Kārb is earlier. It has only two metres, Indravichien, Sanskrit Indravajrā and Vasantatilok, Sanskrit Vasantatilakā. It does not follow the short and long, *laghu-guru*, syllable scheme. Probably there was no awareness of it when it came into vogue. In the earlier stages of development the name Indravajrā was also not in vogue. It was called Yānī from the first two syllables of the line : *yānīha bhūtāni samāgatāni*. Later the name Indravichien came to replace it. The Chan type of classification recognizes, thanks to the Sanskrit influence becoming much more pronounced, the short and long, *laghu-guru*, scheme of syllables. It is

the one which has all the Sanskritic metres including the ones, *Indravichien* and *Vasantatilok* forming part of *Kārb*.

Even though the Thais drew metres from Sanskrit, they did not leave them as they were; they introduced some innovations in them the most important of which was rhyme employed at regular well defined intervals and one-line or two-line verses in contradistinction to the four-line verse pattern of Sanskrit. The only four-line verse metres are the ones which are octosyllabic, a kind of system existing here too, e.g.; *Pathyāvat*, *Vicchummala* (Sanskrit *Vidyunmālā*), *Mānavaka* and *Citrapadā*. The two-line verse-metres are the maximum : *Indravichien* (*Indravajrā*), *Upendravichien* (*Upendravajrā*), *Upachāt* (*Upajāti*), *Vaṁsattha* (*Vaṁśastha*), *Indrawong* (*Indravamśa*), *Vasantatilok* (*Vasantatilakā*), *Salinī* (*Śālinī*), *Upathitā* (*Upasthitā*), *Phūchoṅkhaprayāt* *Bhujaṅgaprayāta*), *Toṭaka* and *Kamalā*. The one-line verse metres are the bigger ones like the *Saddullavikkīlita* (*Śārdūlavikrīḍita*) *Saddharā* (*Sragdharā*), and *Mālinī*.

It was some 200 years ago that Sanskrit metres came to be used in Thai poetry. Though they have been taken from Sanskrit, there is a departure from it in the trisyllables or the *Gaṇas* or the short and long, *laghu-guru*, system of Sanskrit. There is no strict rule in it about the length of each syllable. In Thai poetry the rhythm is provided by the break up of the line.

It is curious that some of the more popular metres of Sanskrit like *Mandākrāntā*, immortalized by *Kālidāsa* in his *Meghadūta*, are missing in Thai poetry. It is still more curious that the metres like *Anuṣṭubh* in which a substantial part of Sanskrit poetry is composed is found carrying an altogether different name of *Pathyāvat* or *Paṭhyāvat* in Thai poetry. Further, *Prṭhivī* or *Vipulā* which is the name of a particular

metre in Sanskrit, is used in Thai for a variety of Pathyā or Anuṣṭubh, also called Śloka in Sanskrit.

A few specimens of Thai verses in Sanskrit metres would not be out of place here :

In Vasantatilakā :

sae sap prasān duriyasangkhitaphāt ya pherī
srop sing pra dā pra du ca sī suralok cha lo long

“The sounds of the music blending with each other, the drum, the singing and everything in music, as if the entire band is transferred from the land of the gods.”

In Mālinī :

pra fuita kamala chūn chom
phoei kaihāram pho thām pai
anucha sathita doen dāi
nām sakun chanai sanoe riam

“The Buddha, having his heart gladdened started his enquiry asking : my young one, where do you live, what is your family's name, please tell me.”

In Toṭaka :

khana nan issaret
phra pravet vana phāi
rahu thāna sabai
i riyā batha van
phata se tanamūn
thā kophūn harūban
sukhu dom daru van
vara thep thavi ong

“At that moment Lord Śiva entered into the private sector of his forest. He relaxed his activities at the foot of the white mountain. There he enjoyed himself most in that forest with another one, they were only two of them.”

In Bhujaṅgaprayāta :

*phākphūn phanāran cara saen sarān rom
noen rāb salab som pitsaploen caroen cai
khot khoen si khon khau lae lam nau phanā tai
sūng liw lalān nāi ya na phon prāmān mai*

“At the surface of the forest, wandering very pleasantly sometimes hilly, sometimes plain, alternate properly, looking at it is pleasant to the heart. Small and high hills and peaks of the mountain and also the range of trees very tall. So many things appearing before eyes beyond counting.”

It may incidentally be mentioned that certain types of Thai poetry have Sanskritic names Nirāt, Sanskrit Nirāśa, Lilit, Sanskrit Lalita.

As for the Sanskrit Mss., Thailand, surprisingly, is particularly deficient. Out of 57697 bundles¹ of Mss. with the National Library, Bangkok, there are only one or two bundles of Sanskrit Mss. Only recently a Mss. of the *Vairāgyaśataka* on palm leaf belonging to the period of king Rama III has come to light.

Sanskrit begins to appear in inscriptions in Thailand from the sixth century A.D. onwards. So far some 44 of them have been discovered of which ten have been published in book form², the rest of them are appearing periodically in journals.

1. A bundle means a lot. It may have sometimes 4 or 5 Mss.
2. Recueil des Inscriptions du Siam, Deuxieme Partie : Inscriptions Dvāravatī de Śrīvijaya et de Iavo, editees et traduites par G. Coedes, Department of Fine Arts, Bangkok. 1961.

The influence of Sanskrit on Thai is all-pervasive. There may be few fields which may not have come under its impact. A study of Thai from the point of view of Sanskrit content in it may be highly rewarding though none too easy.

The present essay may not be complete without reference to the present day Thai scholars of Sanskrit. Their smallness in number is more than made up by the devotion and the total dedication that they bring to bear on the study of the language and its literature. Headed by Prof. Visudh Busyakul they are busy contributing their mite in analysing and laying bare the charming wealth of Sanskrit literature. Professor Busyakul's work pertains to a number of topics. He has brought out a collection of his writings under the title: *Visudh's Nibondh*, writings of Visudh. His colleague in his Department, the Department of Eastern Languages, Chulalongkorn University, Dr. Pranee Lapanich has devoted years to the study of Kṣemendra, particularly his *Kalāvīlāsa*. Prof. Seksri Yamnadda in the Deptt. of Thai of the same University has published some three articles on Sanskrit subjects like the *Sun in Vedic Literature*, *Women in Sanskrit Literature* and *Aśvins*. Miss Subrangsu Indraruna of the Srinakharinwirot University who had earlier produced a valuable thesis, as stated in the preceding pages, on *Passive and Causative Verbal System in Epic Sanskrit* is at the moment working on the project of a comparative study of the Thai and Sanskrit words. Prof. Chamlong Sarapadnuke of the Silpakorn University is a prolific writer having a large number of publications, a majority of them small monographs, to his credit. They are: *Practical Sanskrit Grammar*, Part I Published, Parts II and III coming, *Saṃskṛturacanāvidhi*, (Śyāmaka and Arhatvargas only) *Saṃskṛta Jātaka*, Part II, *Introduction to R̥gveda*, *Manual of Vedic Grammar*, *Samāsa*, *Taddhita*, *Samjñāvidhāna*, *Sandhi* and *Avyaya*.

Dr. Chirapat Prapandvidya of the same University has worked for his Ph. D. degree on a *Cultural Study of the Dharmāraṇyapurāṇa*. Prof. Choosakdi Dipayagasorn of the National Library, Bangkok, has worked on the Inscriptions of Thailand. He has edited and published quite a few of them in journals. Prof. Prayoon Santankuro of the Mahamakuta Buddhist University, Bangkok has published a work on *Sandhi*.

Two of Thai scholars, Miss Supraphan Na Bang Chang, and Mrs. Manipin are working currently for their Doctorate degrees in Sanskrit in the Universities of Kandy, Ceylon, and London, England.

Thai scholars have done valuable work in the field of Sanskrit lexicography too. There are at least three dictionaries by them, two trilingual and one quadrilingual :

- (1) *Sanskrit-Thai-English Abhidhāna* by Captain Luang Bowornbannarak.
- (2) *Sanskrit-Pali-English Dictionary* by Krom Pra Chantaburi Narunat.
- (3) *Pali-Sanskrit-Thai-English Dictionary* by Chalad Bunloy Prayut Prayutto,

Most of the work that the Thais have carried out in the field of Sanskrit is through the medium of Thai. But that in no way minimizes its importance. Scholars in different countries have worked on Sanskrit literature through their respective media and their contribution has merited them recognition, medium in no way coming in their way. The survey in the preceding pages is sufficient to give an idea of the work put in by the Thais in the field of Sanskrit. These forming a small, yet determined, group are carrying on their work with singleminded devotion studying and interpreting the ancient Indian wisdom and carrying forward the tradition so ably laid by their predecessors.

SANSKRIT INSCRIPTIONS OF THAILAND

A LITERARY APPRAISAL

The influence of Sanskrit on Thailand is noticeable not only in the presence of a big chunk of Sanskrit words in Thai, it is noticeable in a sizable number, some two scores, of inscriptions in Sanskrit. In length they represent two extremes, some are very small like the one from Nakhon Si Thammarat which has just the word *Liṅgeśvaram* in it and the other very big like the Sdok Kok Thom Inscription from Pranchinburi which has 128 stanzas in 412 lines. The majority of them, however, lie in between the two extremes being of moderate size. Such, for instance, are the Inscription of Singala or Manai cave of 6th century A.D., the Inscription at the Temple of Mamuang, Nakhon Si Thammarat of 775 A.D., the Wat Thipedi Inscription of Īśānavarman II of 832 Śāka Era or 910 A.D., the Prasad Sralau Inscription of Harṣavarman III of Śāka Era 993 or 1071 A.D., the Old Panom Rung Inscription of 1117 A.D., the New Panom Rung Inscription of almost the same date, the Inscription of Wat Vieng of Surat Thani province of 1250 A.D. and the Inscription from Ayutthaya and Suan Phak Kard palace, Bangkok of uncertain date. Quite a few of these are in beautiful style and represent genuine poetry with all the wealth of similes, metaphors, fancies and a host of other figures of speech. They are records of certain events like the laying of brick buildings, consecration of a shrine, the excavation of a well, the construction of a Stūpa and so on. It is a tribute to their poet-com-

posers that they invested them with a poetic garb. With their magic touch they ceased to be matter-of-fact records and turned into charming pieces of poetry.

The description of their patron kings and their genealogies offered the maximum opportunity to these poet composers to show their poetic abilities as they did in India. They represent a sort of court poetry that was the vogue in the medieval ages and even earlier. Poets vied with each other in praising their patrons to win their favour. But this in no way minimizes the importance of this form of poetry. After all, it has given rise to some of the finest creations of the human mind. Admittedly, it is inspiration that produces poetry, and the inspiration in turn is produced by anything that stirs the poet. It could well be material considerations. Once inspired, the poet composers soared high on the wings of poesy bringing into full play their wealth of knowledge of tradition and mythology, rhetorics and prosody, vocabulary and grammar. At places they seem to be out to create poetry. That robs their compositions of the naturalness, the spontaneous outflow of emotions through their carriers, the words but happily such instances are few and far between. In rare cases the poet composers permit themselves the use of some recondite forms or tangled expressions. Allowance has no doubt to be made for such oddities in inscriptional poetry of different periods and of varying merit. By and large, however, it proceeds with effortless ease. And that is what is important.

Since many of these inscriptions are part panegyrics they have inevitably quite an element of hyperbole in them. To a modern rational mind they may appear rather amusing. But that cannot blur the flight of imagination of the poet composers. After all, hyperbole has all along been recognized a figure of speech, an embellishment of poetry.

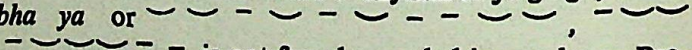
Almost the entire Sanskrit inscriptional poetry is in verse.¹ This is in line with the tradition. An overwhelmingly large part of Sanskrit poetry is composed in verse. The Sanskrit poets found verse to be rhythmic and in spite of the constraints of metre chose it in preference to prose. This afforded them the opportunity to infuse music into their compositions. Metre, though coming in the way of the employment of the words at will, contributed not a little to this for it provided the compositions with the necessary rhythm. And larger the number of metres employed, the larger the rhythmic variety.

An analysis of the metres employed in the inscriptions is quite interesting. From the point of view of frequency Anuṣṭubh comes at the top, some of the whole inscriptions as such having been composed in it, e.g., the Inscription of Singala or Manai Cave, the Inscription of Ban Chang Sa Chaeng, Copper Plate Inscription of U Thong District, Inscription on the Image of the Buddha, the Inscription on the Base of the Standing Image of the Buddha, the Inscription on the Base of Dop Siem Prasad, Ban Budsa Inscription of Ratchasima Province, Prasad Sralau Inscription of Harṣavarman III, Wat Thipedī Inscription of Īsānavarman II, the Ayutthaya Inscription of Bau Ika, Bangkok Museum Inscription of Mahendravarman, the Inscription of Ban That Thong and so on. In an inscription or two, however, such as the Phnom Phrah Vihar Inscription the entire composition is in Anuṣṭubh except a stanza or two here and there. There are some inscriptions like the Sdok Kok Thom Inscription where Anuṣṭubh is found at different inter-

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1. Out of thirty or so Sanskrit inscriptions found in Thailand only one in one line, the Inscription in the Hermit's Cave in Snake Mountain, Rajburi Province, 5th-6th Cen. A.D. is in prose and the Hau Vieng Inscription of Chaiya, Surat Thani Province is partly in prose. The rest of the inscriptions are *all* in verse.

vals, from verses 33-60, 78-91, 97-118, a total of 64 verses which means half the entire composition. In the two Panom Rung Inscriptions the last of the four sections are in Anuṣṭubh. The inscriptions which have metres other than Anuṣṭubh are comparatively few. They are, however, generally rather lengthy, providing an ample opportunity to the poet-composers of the inscriptions to show their skill in metrical variety. Though employing different metres, some of these show their preference for Upajāti which is comparatively more frequent in them. At least one inscription, the Suan Phak Kard Palace Inscription, Bangkok is composed entirely in it. In the Old Panom Rung Inscription out of its twenty four verses (excluding the last portion which, as said earlier, is in Anuṣṭubh) thirteen are in Upajāti. Of the remaining eleven, five are in Indravajrā, one in Upendravajrā, four in Vasantatilakā and one in Mālinī. The New Panom Rung Inscription, however, shows its preference for Vasantatilakā. Out of its total of twenty two verses (excluding the last portion which, as in the case of the Old Panom Rung inscription is in Anuṣṭubh), thirteen are in Vasantatilakā with Upajāti trailing behind with just seven verses. The remaining two verses are in Mālinī.

The Sdok Kok Thom Inscription shows a good variety in its non-Anuṣṭubh part. Of its sixty four verses, thirty four are in Upajāti, eight each in Indravajrā and Vasantatilakā, five each in Mālinī and Mālabhāriṇī one each in Upendravajrā, nad Vamśastha and two in un-identifiable metres.¹ The inscri-

1. Of these two. the verse, No. 120, has the second half in Mālabhāriṇī. The first half's rhythm *sa ja ga ga, sa bha bha ya* or  is not found recorded in works on Prosody. The other verse, No. 32, stands in a category in itself. Not a part of it can be assigned to any known metre. It has one peculiarity, viz., its second and the fourth lines are rhythmically akin while the first and the third have different rhythms.

ption at the Temple of Mamuang has on the first side two verses in Śikhariṇī, one in Hariṇī, one in Upajāti and two in an unidentifiable metre.¹ The four verses on the second side are equally divided in Śārdūlavikrīḍita and Āryā. The Wat Phu Inscription of Jayavarman I has all of its five stanzas in Śārdūlavikrīḍita.

The poet composers of the inscriptions have been fairly correct in the use of metres. It is very seldom that they permit themselves any aberration. It is only in instances like *yenākṛṣṭaṃ dvibharaṃ saśaravaradhanur yogyayāpāstam astram*² the metre is violated or in instances like

*rudhi (ci) rarucilavaṇ candras tadāsyē tadīye
sakalakamalam apy aṅghridvaye bhāṇ vi (bi) bhartti
yadi divi bhuvi lokānām mato niṣkalaṅko
yadanukaraṇabhūtārccāmarāṇām nṛvandyā*³
and *kṛtavasatitātākādīḥ parāthaikavṛttiḥ*.⁴

that the proper yati, caesura, is not observed.

From the metres now we pass on to the figures of speech. The inscriptions furnish instances of both types of them, the Arthālaṅkāras, the figures of sense and Śabdālaṅkāras, the figures of word. Of the Arthālaṅkāras, the figures of speech of sense, the most frequent is Utpreksā or Poetic Fancy. And there is nothing surprising in it.

A well-known Sanskrit verse equates a poet with the creator, Prajāpati, and asserts that the world assumes the form that the poet likes to invest it with :

*apāre kāvyasaṁsāre kavir eva prajāpatiḥ
yathā ai rocate viśvaṁ tathedaṁ parivartate*

1. The rhythm is *bha ta na bha ga ga* or — — — — —
— — — — — Metrical texts like the *Piṅgala Chandaḥśāstra*, *Chandomañjarī*, etc. do not record any metre with this rhythm.
2. Wat Phu Inscription of Jayavarman I, verse 2.
3. New Panom Rung Inscription, Face I, lines 19-20.
4. Sdok Kok Thom Inscription, verse 119.

The question is how he looks at things. And he may not look at things the way others do. He has his own vision of things and events; his own explanation for certain phenomena. Thus he may see in the Lakṣmī's abiding in the bosom of Viṣṇu for lending beauty to the Kaustubha jewel the hint that she loves even the hard-natured if only they depend upon him (Viṣṇu).¹ Similarly he may discover the reason for Umā's forming half the body of Śiva in the washing off of the sin of the burning of Kāma by the latter (Śiva)² in the very presence of the former (Umā). Equally he may find the reason for the name *smara* given by Pārvatī to Śiva feeling incensed at Smara's (Kāmā's—Cupid's) being burnt to ashes along with his stretched bow for her sake by him.³ In the same strain the three eyes of Śiva, the poet fancies to be the fire, the moon and the sun,⁴ and the carrying of Gaṅgā by him as the device to keep equilibrium between heat and cold, the heat of the fire and the

1. *Lakṣmīpatir vvo'vatu yasya Lakṣmīr
vakṣaḥsthitā kaustubhabhūṣaṇāya
snihyāmi sāhaṁ kaṭhinasvabhāveṣv
apy āśriteṣv atra sadeti nūnam*

2. *vande dehārdhatānītām umāṁ madanavidiṣā
samakṣamadanaploṣadoṣaprakṣālanād iva*

Wat Thipedi Inscription of Īśānavarman II, Verse 4;

3. *smarāridevyā vijitāṁ smarasya
vikṛṣṭacāpasya śaraiḥ sahāṅge
bhaṣmīkṛte yā svakṛte ruṣeva
smarābhīdheyāṁ kurute smarārim*

Inscription in Dop Siem Prasad, Aranyaprathet, Lines 8-9

4. *vahnicanḍrārkkānetro yas sarvakāraṇasārakaḥ*

Inscription of Bau Ika, Second Side, verse 1.

trinetrānetratrayasādmabhājo

bhittiveva bhāsadvidhuhavyavāhāḥ

Suan Phak Kard Palace Inscription, Bangkok, verse 4.

sun and the cold of the moon.¹ So does he imagine even Guha assailed by doubt as to whether the queer personality of the daughter of Himālaya, Umā, half male and half female, is his mother or not.²

Śiva carries a part of the moon, which earns him the appellation *ardhendudhara*. Further, half of his body is made up of Umā. The remaining half that is his is also that of Viṣṇu, he being non-distinct from him. Śiva, therefore, is a queer combination of so many halves—the half of the moon, the half of Umā and the half of Viṣṇu. Why should there be so many halves in him, the poet in one of the inscriptions asks himself. Well, his innovative imagination is there to provide him the answer. It is to serve Śiva that each one of the three, the moon, Umā and Viṣṇu have parted with their halves.³

The description of the valour of the patron kings provides the poets of the inscriptions ample opportunities for fancies. Thus the arms coming out of the armour of the body of a king a poet fancies to be the snakes coming out of the hollows of a

1. *namaś śivāyāstu śivāya vo yāś
śaṅke śaśāṅkāṇalasūryanetraḥ
uṣṇatvaśitatvasamatvam īpsus
svāsye vi(bi)bharty adbhutajahnujātām*

New Panom Rung Inscription, Face I verses 8-9.

2. *namadhvaṁ haradehūrdhahārīṇim (nīṇ) himavatsutām
amv(b)ā na veti sāśaṅkaṁ paśyati sma Guho 'pi yām*

Ayutthaya Inscription, verse 2.

3. *namadhvaṁ ardhendudharan tam arddhā-
ṅgāśāraṅgi (śārṅgi) nomārdhakalevaraṁ yam
śauriś va (ca) gaurī ca śiśuś śaśī ca
nu sevitum tyaktakalevaro 'rddhaḥ**

New Panom Rung Inscription, Face 2, verse 8, Lines

16-17.

*The text may be amended here as *tyaktakalevarārdhāḥ*.

mountain.¹ Another, may be he is the same one, in another inscription, for the inscriptions have been found on the two halves of the same pillar from the same place, imagines his king immersed in the battle field to be immersed in the bloody ocean, full of chopped-off heads of the enemy elephants, with his head sticking out as if it were the head of a living elephant sporting in an ocean of red lead.² In still another inscription a different poet sees in the blood-stained sword in the battlefield of his king the red lotus taken away as bribe from the battle fortune on account, as it were, of forcibly dragging her by the hair.³ The same poet at yet another place takes the figure of deer in the orb of the moon to be the earth who has taken recourse to it being heated as it were by the spreading fires of his prowess.⁴ Proceeding on, the same poet finds in the reflections of the kings with bent heads in the jewels of the nails of his feet an attempt to

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1. *bhujadvayan nirjitavairivṛnda-
dṛṣṭārdhabhāgan dhṛtavarmmayuktam
yasya sma dehārdha ga (gi) rīndrarandhra-
nīryātabhogīndravibhāni vi (bi) bhartti*

ibid. verse 10.

2. *nikṛttaviḍviḍviradottamāṅgaṁ
raktārṇave yena raṇe nimagnam
sindūradigdhām(b)unidhau ratasya
ji(jī) vadgajasyeva śīro rarāja*

Panom Rung Inscription, Face 2, verse 3.

3. *bhinnārīrājarudhirāruṇitāni va (ba)bhāra
khaḍgaṁ raṇe sphurudīrṇavikīrṇabhāsam
yo mūrdhajagraha va(ba)lād iva jātajoṣam
utkocakokanadam āhṛtam ājilakṣmyāḥ*

Sdok Kok Thom Inscription, verse 14.

4. *tejonalavyatikarair hariṇacchalena
taptā nu yasya vidhuvi(bi)mva(ba)m upāsritorvvi*

ibid., verse 15.

make them a part of his being.¹ A poet in one of the inscriptions conceives his king as Viṣṇu on the very basis of his valour.² Another poet in another inscription imagines that the fire of the prowess of his king ever illumines with its flame the nights in the form of the battles with lamps in the form of the burnt conceited adversaries due to the sight of the glory of victory as it were.³

In still another inscription a king is fancied as possessed of the desire to conquer his enemies with his right arm to prove that what was possible of accomplishment with the use of two arms was possible in his case with the use of one arm only.⁴ A king is fancied in one of the inscriptions to have been fashioned by the creator with a view to bringing stability as it were to the excellent Dharma.⁵ Similarly, a king in yet another inscription is spoken of as having the sound of the Śruti manifest in

1. *yasyāṅghripanīkajayuganī prañayipriyatvaṁ
prakhyāpayan nakhamañiprativi (bi)mvi (bi)tānām
vṛndāni namraśirasām avanīśvarāṇām
svāṅge nyaveśayad upāsī dayālu manye*
ibid., verse 16.
2. *śrīcānāśādhipatiś śripatir iva vikrameṇāsīt*
Ayutthaya Inscription, verse 6.
3. *dagdhadṛptadviṣaddīptadīpitājiniśo 'niśaṁ
yat tejodahano dīptyā jayaśrīdarśanād iva*
Prasad Sralau Inscription of Harṣavarman III, verse 8.
4. *yo 'sau parān dhāmabhujena jetum
ājau vinā savyabhujāṁ nu śaktaḥ
punar jayan savyabhujena kāryaṁ
savyāpasavyāhitam icchati sma*
Old Panom Rung Inscription, Face 2, Verse 1.
5. *jayaty ayam śrīvijayendrarājā
sāmantarājārccitvamā (?) sanaśrīḥ
praśastadharmasthīratonukhena
vinirmmito viśvasrjeva yatnāt*
Inscription at the Temple of Mamuang, verse 5.

his mouth ; his nose and ears being close to it, the ears are helpful in receiving it and the nose is helpful in reproducing it.¹ The same king in the same inscription is said to cause dissociation of the great people with their kith and kin and all that belongs to them as they drink at his (the king's) superior poetic composition much in the same way as a faithful woman leaves all attachment to a person other than her husband however superior he may be.²

It is not only valour, other qualities of the patron kings or their ancestors also provide the Thai composers of Sanskrit inscriptions opportunities for play of imagination. Thus in one of the inscriptions the creator is said to keep a rosary in his hand just to keep count of the achievements in arts of the king under reference.³

At another place in the same inscription the same king is fancied to be Kāma turned into his (the king's) form by the creator with nectar-like rays when he (the creator) found that the former, created by him with special interest and discrimi-

1. *syana (?) nāsā kila sannikṛṣṭā*
jagatpratītā nu mukhasya karṇaḥ
.....(suta ?) nīam antyantikatā (tām) gatto (to) syā
sye yat sphuṭas tatśrutisabdaśabdaḥ
 New Panom Rung Inscription, Face 2, verse 5, Lines 9-10.
2. *..... sa yasyādhikam padya (ba) ndham*
sahitahitaśabdārtha (tham?) mahāntaḥ pī (pī) v (b) antaḥ
sakalasakalam ātmīyam tyajanty eva yattra
param aparam api strī va tyajaty ātmav (b) andham
 ibid., verse 7, Lines 13-14.
3. *guṇeṣu niṣṇātadhiyo nu yasya*
śilpādiṣu prīṭamanā mahattvam
saiṅkhyātukāmo japanacchalena
sraṣṭū 'kṣamālām adhunāpi dhatte
 Sdok Kok Thom Inscription, verse 9.

ation had been burnt by the fire from the eye of Śiva.¹

At still another place in the same inscription Lakṣmī is said to embrace the king all round not liking to form just half of his body as Pārvatī does of Śiva.²

A very charming fancy in one of the inscriptions relates to a head cut off by a disc, first going up and then coming down on the earth. The poet fancies that the head has come down because it has been pushed down by the heavenly damsels for, though cut off, it still was remembering the wives on the earth.³ Why should the damsels in the heaven accept something that still had attachment with the people on the earth? Being feminine they could as well be jealous as the women on the earth are !

In an inscription enemy soldiers carried quickly up the poet fancies to have been sent up by the chief of the enemy army himself to count from above the number of the dead and the living among his soldiers.⁴

1. *sṛṣṭo mayā ruciviśeṣavivekabhājā
yāto harākṣidahanenda (dha) natān manojah
ity ātmabhūr yyam upapādyā sudhāmayibhir
manye smarañ rucibhir īśvaratān nināya*

Sdok Kok Thom Inscription, verse 6.

2. *kāham himādrītanayeva śārīrayaster
ardham manoramavarasya pariṣvajāmi
ity unmanā iva manoratharaṅgam aṅgam
ālīngate sma paritaḥ kila yasya Lakṣmīḥ*

ibid., verse 7.

3. *utkṛttamūrdhboddhata (dbhava?) vidviśān yac
cakreṇa jāyāsmaraṇaś ca nītaḥ
vyomotpatan bhūmigato va (ba) bhau nu
dyustriṇirastas svavadhūsmaratvāt*

Old Panom Rung Inscription, Face 2, verse 7.

4. *yasyārim ekam śaraśīghrañītam
ūrdhvan drutan drāg va (ba) lamaṇḍalebhyah
mṛtāmṛtānān gaṇanāya nūnañ
yuddhe 'nayad vairiva (ba) lādhipendraḥ*

ibid. verse 5

The foot of Viṣṇu encompassing the universe is fancied in one of the inscriptions to have been raised by Gaṅgā to eclipse the loftiness of the Himālaya, the father of her co-wife (Pārvati).¹

The three eyes of Śiva the poet imagines to be the symbols for three Gods : Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa.² Since the three eyes representing the three gods are all on the same forehead, it makes one infer the identity of all of them who are otherwise looked upon as different from each other.³

In one of the inscriptions the poet describes the three eyes of Śiva as the abode, the *sadman* as he calls them, to which deities resort out of fear as it were when they notice the king's lustre excelling that of the sun⁴.

The poets of the inscriptions go on, one after the other, with fancies like these. For want of space it is difficult to be exhaustive in their treatment here. Just as with *Utpreksās* Fancies, so with *Rūpakas*, Metaphors and *Upamās*, Similes.

1. *vande viṣṇvaṅghrim ākrānta-
bhuvanani gaṅgayoddhṛtam
sapatnyā janakādrīndra-
tuṅgatākṣepaṇād iva.*

Prasad Sralau Inscription of Harṣavarman III, verse 2.

- 2-3 *padmāsanāv (b) janayanaikyagato' pi dṛṣṭai-
ko 'han dṛṣṭānyakathito 'nyavidā dhiyaivam
āsaṅkya yas trinayanan vividhānumānan
nūnan dadhāti vidhudhāryy anīsam sa.....(vo) 'vyāt*
Old Panom Rung Inscription, Face 2, verse 9.

4. *trī (tri) netranetratrayasadmabhājo
bhittyeva (bhītyeva) bhāsvadvidluhavyavāhā (hāḥ)
tejasvi tejo jayi vikṣya tajaḥ
trī (tri) netracintā hṛdayasya yasya*

Suan Phak Kard Palace Inscription, Bangkok, verse 4.
Also see—

*vahnicanandrārkkkanetro yas
sarvakāraṇa (ṇa) sārakaḥ
vṛṣadhvaḥjaḥ*

Inscription of Bau Ika, Second side, verse 1.

The composers of the inscriptions are quite profuse in their use. Thus a poet speaks of the king (Narendrāditya) as the orb of the moon,¹ the queen as Bhavānī,² the prowess of the king as the arm by which alone he vanquishes his enemies,³ the deep ocean as his heart⁴ and the sacrifices as the canoes by which he (Hiraṇya) could cross the third and the sixth oceans in the form of the essence of the Bhāṣya.⁵

Another poet speaks of the king (Sūryavarman) as the sun for the beauty of the worlds which are spoken of as lotuses⁶ and his protege Vīravarmman as the lion for the foes who are described as deer.⁷ Still another poet speaks of the king

1. *śrīsūryapitranubhavā caturan Narendrā-*

dityābhidaṇ (ta) m asṛjaj jagadinduv(b)imv (b) am

Old Panom Rung Inscription, Face 1, verse 8.

2. *bhūbhṛdbhavānvayabhavā bhuvi bhūpatīndra-*
lakṣmīr va(ba)bhūva bhuvanābhimatā bhavānī

ibid.

3. *yo 'sau parūn dhāmabhujena jetum*
ibid., Face 2, verse 1.

4. *purvva (m) gabhīro 'v (b) dhir ataḥ prakarṣaṇ*
gabhirabhūs taddhṛdayāyamānaḥ

ibid., Face 3, verse 3.

5. *tṛtīyaśaṣṭhārṇavabhāṣyasāra-*
pāre 'gamad yajñagaṇoḍupena

ibid., Face 4, verse 3.

6. *śrīsūryavarmmā bhuvanāmvu(bu)jaśrīsūryyaḥ*
Suan Phak Kard Palace Inscription, Bangkok, verse 3.

7. *śrīvīravarmmāpy anujas tayor yyo*
yodhāgraṇir (nīr) vairimṛge mṛgendraḥ

ibid., verse 9.

causing the world lotus to bloom.¹ His fame is spoken of as the Mandāra tree with his praises as flowers.²

A different poet speaks of the poverty as the flames of fire³ and the king as the flaming jewel on the hoods of serpents⁴ as also the sun for the darkness represented by his enemies⁵ and the stūpas and the caityas as the best desire-yielding jewel, Cintāmaṇi.⁶

A still different poet speaks of his patron king as the moon, the sun and Cupid in beauty.⁷ In another inscription a king is said to be having ornaments in the form of justice and fair revenue. His feet are spoken of as beautiful trees that have grown on the heads of the kings (of the territories upto) the

1. *āsīd aśeṣāvanibhṛddhṛtāṅghrīr
jagaddhṛdambhojavibodhavyṛttiḥ
dhvāntan niḥantā vasudhādhīrājo
dhāmnodayādītya iti pratītiḥ*

Sdok Kok Thom Inscription, verse 5.

2. *yatkīrttimandārataruḥ prathīyan
rūḍhaḥ pṛthivyāṁ stutipuṣpakīrṇaḥ*

Suan Phak Kard Palace Inscription, Bangkok,
verse 12.

3. *dhanavikalatāvahnijvālāvali ..*

Inscription at the Temple of Mamuang, verse 3.

4. *maṇir jyotirlekhāvalayī śīrasāṁ cāpi phaṇinām*

ibid., verse 2.

5. *yo 'sau rājādhīrājao sakalaripugaṇadhvāntasūryopamaikaḥ*

ibid., second side, verse 1.

6. *devendrābhena ca śrīvijayanṛpatinā 'nyakṣitīśottamena
trailokyaikāggyacintāmaṇivapuṣa i(vasthā) pitās(stū)
pacai(tyāḥ)*

ibid. verse 3.

7. *saṁrūpeṇa hi candrabhānumadanaḥ*

Hau Vieng Inscription, Chaiya, verse 1.

ocean who are spoken of as the mountains.¹ His minister is spoken of in the inscription as the appearance of the fruit of the Santānaka tree in the garb of so many saints.²

At one place in one of the inscriptions the poet speaks of the digit of the moon on Śiva's forehead as a heavenly petal.³ His explanation for Śiva's bearing it on his forehead is that he is doing so for fear of it burning up the whole world. Well, it was the flame from his third eye that had burnt up Kāma.

Of the similes, the one that is particularly charming is where the king is said to illumine the family just as the moon does the sky.⁴

Another charming simile is connected with Śiva and Pārvatī. Their being one with each other is compared to that of fire with flame.⁵

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1. *rājā Śrīharṣavarmmāsīt
sannyāyāgamabhūṣaṇaḥ
ā samudramahīndrādri-
mūrdhārūḍhāṅghrisudrumaḥ*
Prasad Sralau Inscription of Harṣavarman III,
verse 4.
 2. *Braikaṇlongsādhūasantānasantānakaphalodayaḥ*
ibid, verse II.
 3. *netrārcirddagdhakāmena Śaṅkareṇa jitaṁ dhruvam
lakadāhabhayād bhūyo yo 'rddhendusvarddalādharāḥ*
Inscription on the base of the Buddha Image.
Wat Mahathat, Lopburi, verse 1.
 4. *tadanvaye vṛddhakalaś
śrīsundaraparākramaḥ
kulam uddyotayann āsīt
gaganun (nani) candramā iva*
Inscription on the base of the Buddha Image,
Wat Mahathat, Lopburi, verse 4.
 5. *Śivo jayaty unmanayaikadhāmā
tadekavad yaḥ śikhayeva vahnīḥ*
Suan Phak Kard Palace Inscription, Bangkok,;
verse 1.

In an inscription a king is compared to the clear autumnal moon and Cupid on account of his majesty and lovely beauty.¹

In one of the inscriptions the poet compares the begetting of the son (Jayavarman) by the king (Hiraṇyavarman) with the begetting of the digits by the moon.² He speaks of the king as the burning fire.³ His practising of penance on Ramyagiri he compares with that of Śiva on Kailāsa⁴ The shooting flame of his fire going deep into his heart he compares with the submarine fire.⁵

In another inscription the poet likens the king to an ocean in being the repository of a multitude of jewels.⁶ So

1. *svaujobhiḥ kāntalakṣmyā śaradamala-
saśimanmathābhah*

Inscription at the Temple of Mamuang, second side,
verse 1

2. *Hiraṇyalakṣyām avanīndradevyāṁ
mahīdharāṁ śrījayavarmmade(vam)
mahīpatiḥ so ' jantayad yathāgryaṁ
kalākalāpan divi.....*

Old Panom Rung Inscription, Face 1, verse 4.

3. *jvaladanalanibhaḥ*

Old Panom Rung Inscription, Face 2, verse 8.

4. *ramye girau ramyagiripratīte
nānādrumaiḥ pelavapallavāgraiḥ
vrataṁ cakārāruḥ adhāmabhir yaḥ
Kailāsaśaile giriśo yathā prāk*

New Panom Rung Inscription, lines 18-19.

5. *hṛd atyagāḍhāv(b) dhibhiyeva yoge
(ya) syaurvavad vahnivibhorddhvabhūtā*

Old Panom Rung Inscription, Face 3, verse 3.

6. *maññāṁ bhūrīṇāṁ duritavid udantvān iva mahān*

Inscription at the Temple of Mamuang,

First Side, verse 2.

does he compare him with an ever undriable lake with limited and salutary water to which all those who suffer from the flames of the fire of privation repair, as do the elephants *into it (the lake)* in the buring heat of the sun.¹

In still another inscription a king is spoken of as having encompassed with his seven vital airs the circle of seven constituents of the state as does the sun the seven continents with its rays.² He is further described as having overcome the lustrous by his might eclipsing the entire world as also the violent, the petty, the gentle and the big as does the sun, the fire, the moon and the stars.³ In yet another inscription the spreading fame (*visāriṇī kīrtti*) of a king is said to eclipse the fame of (the other) kings of the world just as do the rays of the autumnal moon the light of the stars.⁴

Of the other Arthālaṅkāras, figures of sense, noticed in the inscriptions are Virodha, Contradiction, Yathāsamkhyā, Relative Order, Samāsokti, Model Metaphor and Saṅkara, Conjunction. The examples of the first, Virodha, are furnished by the verses :

1. *dhanavikālatāyahnijvālāvalikṣapitāśayā*
yam abhipatitā ye te svāsthyam param samupāgatāḥ
hradam iva gajā nityāśoṣyām prasannaśubhāmbhasam
savitari tapaty ugre sevyam sarojarajo 'ruṇam
ibid., verse 3.
2. *saptāsudivarair yo 'laṁ saptaprakṛtimaṇḍalam*
saptadvīpam iva vyāpa saptasaptir ivaiśubhiḥ
Prasad Sralau Inscription of Harṣavarman III,
verse 5.
3. *tejasvino jagajjātaraṇjanenorjjasā 'jayat*
tīkṣṇān mṛdūn aṇūn sthūlān yo 'gnīndūdūn ivāmśumān
ibid., verse 6.
4. *param yasya krāntā bhuvanakubhujām kirttivisarā*
mayūkhās tārāṇām śaradī tuhināmśor iva rucā
Inscription of the Temple of Mamuang, First Side,
verse 1.

- (i) *somavarṁśyo py aridhvānta-
pradhvaṁśsanadivākaraḥ*.¹
- (ii) *yas tyaktajaḍasaṅgo'pi
saṅgopitavṛṣapriyaḥ*²
- (iii) *pakṣihirṁsro 'pi saṁyuge
...dviṁmāṁsapiṇḍena yaḥ kākādīn atarpayat*³
- (iv) *prajñāśraddhākṣamālajjā-
karuṇāsāt yavādītā
strīṣ āsu nityasakto 'pi
yo guṇāḍhyāsu saṁyamī*⁴
- (v) *yaḥ kāmīnīnikaraniścalamānasastho
'pi sthātum arhati hṛdī sma mahākavīnām*⁵

In (i) a king is spoken of as the sun though born in the lunar dynasty. In (ii) a king is said to have given up attachment to material objects, but still is said to be hiding Śiva⁶ in him. In (iii) a king is described as satiating in the battle, crows and others with the balls of flesh of enemies, though a killer of birds. In (iv) a king is said to have been attached all the time to the virtuous ladies such as intellect, faith, tolerance, modesty, compassion, truthfulness but still is said to be self-restrained. In (v) a king is said to be living in the firm minds of the lovely damsels but still is said to be in a position to dwell in the minds of the great poets.

The example of Yathāsaṁkhyā is found in the verse :

*tejaḥsaundaryagāmbhīrya-
vīryyadhairyyābhijīrmbhitaḥ
sūryyendūdadhīśaurīrās*

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1. Phnom Phra Vihar Inscription of Bhavavarman, verse 3.
 2. Prasad Sralau Inscription of Harṣavarman III, verse 11.
 3. *ibid.*, verse 9.
 4. Wat Thipedi Inscription of Īśānavarman II, verse 16.
 5. New Panom Rung Inscription, verse 2.
 6. Vṛṣapriya is Śiva, being as good as *jaḍa*, for he is not subject to impulses.

*sambhūyeva vha (ba)bhūva yaḥ.*¹

where a king is said to have come into being with the majesty from the sun, beauty from the moon, depth from the ocean, bravery from Kṛṣṇa and forbearance from the earth.

The example of Samāsokti and Saṅkara are found in the verse (iv) quoted under Virodha. In it the character of femininity is ascribed to qualities like prajñā, śraddhā etc. on the basis of the feminine gender. The figure of speech here, therefore, should be Samāsokti. The other figure of speech could be the conjunction of the two figures—Virodha and Samāsokti called by the name Saṅkara.

The works on rhetorics mention a number of varieties of Anuprāsa, Alliteration such as Chekānuprāsa, Single Alliteration, Vṛtṭyanuprāsa, Harmonious Alliteration, Śrūṭyanuprāsa, Melodious Alliteration, Antyānuprāsa, Final Alliteration and Lāṭānuprāsa, the examples of all of which are to be met with in the inscriptions.

Chekānuprāsa is found in :

*rājatīm rājato labdhvā
kārayitvā py atiṣṭhipat.*²

Vṛtṭyanuprāsa is found in :

(i) *namadhvaṁ haradehārdḍha-
hāriṇīm himavatsutām*³

(ii) *bhūbhūjo bhūrayo 'bhūyam
bhūtabhūtivibhūṣaṇāḥ*⁴

(iii) *bhūbhṛdbhavānvayabhavā*

1. Wat Thipedi Inscription of Īśānavarman II, verse 7
2. Phnom Phra Vihar Inscription of Bhavavarman, verse 5.
3. Ayutthaya Inscription, verse 2.
4. *ibid*, verse 3.

*bhuvi bhūpatīndra...*¹

(iv) *jagajjjayo 'sau janayaj janeśaḥ*²

(v) *nītaḥ śīro 'ripatirāśiśirassu sadyaḥ*³

(vi) *bhāsvannabhasvanmṛgavannabhassu*⁴

(vii) *namoṅganāṅganirbhaṅga-*

saṅgine 'pi virāgiṇe

aṅganāpaghanāliṅga-

*linārdḍhāṅgāya śambhave*⁵

(viii) *bodhadhvaddhvāntasaṁrodhavinirdhūtaprajādhiye*

*dhvāntadhva dvedanādarḍhime dhase vedhase namah*⁶

Śrutyanupsāsa is found in :

(i) *tejasvi tejo jayi vīkṣya tej-ḥ*⁷

(ii) *āsīccchrisūryavarmamāhvayadharaṇidharo*

*bhūddharair arcitāṅghriḥ*⁸

Antyānuprāsa is met with in :

taṁgurjjanādhipatinā

*śambūkeśvarasūnūnā*⁹

Lāṭānuprāsa is found in :

*avakravakrakramamaṇḍalardhi*¹⁰

Yamaka, Rhyme is found in :

(i) *hiraṇyagarbhāṇḍahiraṇyabnāṇḍa*¹¹

(ii) *yaśśrīmahendravarmanmeti*

*mahendra iva viśrutaḥ*¹²

1. Old Panom Rung Inscription, Face 1, verse 8.

2. *ibid.*, Face 1, verse 5.

3. *ibid.*, Face 3, verse 6.

4. Suan Phak Kard Palace Inscription, Bangkok, verse 2.

5-6. Wat Thipedi Inscription of Īśānavarman II, verse 1 & 2.

7. Suan Phak Kard Palace Inscription, Bangkok, verse 4.

8. Inscription on the Stone Palace in Pimai, verse 3.

9. Inscription on the Base of the Standing Buddha Image
Lopburi Province.

10. Suan Phak Kard Palace Inscription, Face 1, verse 3.

11. Old Panom Rung Inscription, Face 1, verse 2.

12. Inscription of Ban Sa Chaeng.

(iii) *Braikanloṅgsādhusantāna-
santānakaphalodayaḥ*¹

(iv) *yas tyaktajaḍasaṅgo 'pi
saṅgopitavṛṣapriyaḥ*²

Now a word about the language in the inscriptions. Though composed generally in classical Sanskrit, they do have some aberrations here and there. At places they contain rather unfamiliar, even grammatically indefensible expressions. In the Suan Phak Kard Palace Inscription the poet in the very *maṅgala śloka* uses the word *unmanayā* : *śivo jayaty unmanayai-kadhāmā*, victorious is Śiva sharing the body with *unmanā*. Evidently what he means by *unmanā* is Umā but then *unmanā* in the sense of Umā is not to be found in literature.

Similarly not to be met with in literature is the word Smara for Śiva, a name supposed to have been given to him by his consort Umā according to one of the inscriptions.³ Among the rather uncommon words may also be mentioned the word Vṛṣapriya for Śiva. Evidently a made-up word, it means literally one who loves a bull which in his case is Nandī⁴

The Suan Phak Kard Palace Inscription, Bangkok instead of using words *sūryamaṇḍala* and *candramaṇḍala* uses the expression *avakravakrakramamaṇḍala*⁵ which literally means the planets that do not have retrograde movement.

Mandana means pleasure, joy, but the composer of an inscription seems to use it in the sense of praise : *vinītabhūṣa-kṛtamandanena*.⁶

In the Wat Hau Vieng Inscription the word *ghanaśāsana* is used in the sense of the teachings of the Buddha : *śrīmacchrī-*

1. Prasad Sralau Inscription of Harṣavarmman III, verse 11.

2. *ibid.*

3. Inscription in Dop Siem Prasad, Aranyaprathet, Lines 8-9.

4. Prasad Sralau Inscription of Harṣavarmman III, verse 11.

5. Suan Phak Kard Palace Inscription, Bangkok, verse 3.

6. *ibid.*, verse 8.

ghanaśūsanāgryaśubhadam yas tāmraliṅgeśvaraḥ.¹ The neuter in *śubhada* is a big riddle.

More interesting from the linguistic point of view are such expressions as *pelavapallavāgre*² going with *ramye girau* in the Old Panom Rung Inscription. According to traditional Sanskrit construction it should have been *pelavāgrapallave* with tender young leaves. The adjective is put here after the substantive, a characteristic common to Thai.

The above oddities are luckily few and far between- The inscriptions are generally otherwise composed in highly fluent poetic style. They form a very valuable literature in Sanskrit of Thailand and are a standing testimony to the powerful influence that Sanskrit once exercised in that part of the world.

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1. Hau Vieng Inscription, Chaiya, verse i.
 2. New Panom Rung Inscription, Face 2, Line 18.

THE RĀMĀYAṆA IN THAILAND

The two national epics of India, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, particularly the former, have exercised powerful influence on Thai life. The *Rāmāyaṇa*, called the *Rāmākien* is woven inextricably into the Thai social fabric. The inimitable song of Vālmīki, the immortal bard, is sung in many forms and varieties in different parts of Asia including Thailand. If there is any truly Asian epic, it is the *Rāmāyaṇa* which was fittingly described by Michelet, the French historian, as "a great poem, as vast as the Indian ocean, a book of divine harmony". "A serene peace reigns in it," further says he, "in the midst of conflict, an infinite sweetness, a boundless fraternity which spreads over all living beings, an ocean of love, of pity, of clemency."¹ Every country of Southeast Asia has contributed something to it, reshaped it, adapted it to its situations and traditions and adopted it as its own. Religion has been no bar to its prevalence, predominantly Muslim populations in countries like Indonesia still enjoying its nightlong performances.

The Rāmāyaṇa in Literature :

A peculiarity of the Rāmāyaṇic literature of Thailand is that the word Rāmāyaṇa is not known to it. Equally unknown is its creator, the poet Vālmīki. The name of the *Rāmāyaṇa* that the Thais are familiar with is *Rāmākien*, a changed form Sanskrit *Rāmākīrti* according to some or of Sanskrit *Rāmā-khyāna* according to others. It was not until the reign of king Rāma VI of the present ruling dynasty who gave a scholarly exposition of the origin of the *Rāmākīrti* that the Thais came to know of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and its author Vālmīki.,

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1. Nehru, Jawaharlal, *Discovery of India*, The Signet Press, Calcutta, Second Edition, August 1946, p. 81.

particularly the learned among them who took interest in Thai classics. As regards the people in general, they are still blissfully ignorant of the original name of the epic and its creator.

The Rāmāyaṇic influence on the culture of Thailand has found expression in three distinct forms, i.e., in literature, in dramatics and in painting and sculpture. Although the introduction of the *Rāmāyaṇa* into Thailand can be traced back to a date as early as the 13th Cen. A.D. it is nevertheless, not until the beginning of the Ratnakośīndra period (about 1781 A.D.) that the glory of Rāma came to be expressed in beautiful epic poems. The influence of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in those early centuries is noticeable in the names of kings and nobles and in literary excerpts. The honour of being the first poet of the *Rāmakīrti* belongs to Taksin, the Great, the king of Thonburi who put in verse some events of the great epic which are still extant. The credit of giving a comprehensive account for the first time of the Rāma story, however, goes to king Rāma I, (1782-1880) the founder of the present ruling dynasty. He produced a voluminous work of some ten thousand stanzas covering all the incidents from the origin of Rāma's dynasty to the story of his two sons. King Rāma II (1809-1829 A.D.), his son and successor, gave the story the form of a drama, a much shorter version than that of King Rāma I and consequently easy to put on stage, that began to be played as a mask which with its gaudy dresses of the actors and the actresses, the rhythmic movement of their delicate form and the sweet melody of its catching music still has great appeal to the people and is considered by them as the best Thai dramatic poetry.

It may be pointed out here that the first literature produced for the mask dates back to the Ayuthaya period (1349-1647 A.D.). But like so many Rāmāyaṇic plays the poet

depended on some solitary events of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and showed no evidence of continuity such as we find in the later work of King Rāma II.

But long before the work began to be staged, there was in vogue in Thailand a certain kind of play known as Hnang meaning hide or skin in which all Rāmāyaṇic figures were cut out of hide, painted in their characteristic colour—every Rāmāyaṇic character possesses a distinctive colour of his own, Rāma is green, Lakṣmaṇa is golden, Hanumān is purple, Rāvaṇa is dark and so on. When staged they were very similar to marionettes but their movements instead of being controlled by a string were controlled by hands. The Hnang is generally played in festivals at night. It may be mentioned here in passing, that the Hnang in Thailand was introduced from Java and is an adaptation of the Sanskrit Chāyānāṭaka.

When the origin of something is totally forgotten, it comes to be accepted as indigenous. The same thing happened in case of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. It became *Rāmakien* in Thailand. To quote Mr. Manich Jumsai, the well-known Thai authority on the *Rāmakien* : ‘The Thai version was adapted to Thai sentiments and colouring and portrays the customs, beliefs, politeness and gallantry of Thai ways of life.....True, the story is Indian but the clothes that they now wear are Thai of former days. The story is so made and adapted to Thai character that no Thai thinks of it as a thing originated from foreign origin. It so depicts Thai ways of life and sentiments that it has become a true masterpiece of Thai literature.” The epic is now an inseparable part of Thai life. It is impossible to convince an average Thai that the incidents connected with the Rāma story did not take place in Thailand. In his web of imagination which he thinks to be a reality, he takes them to have taken place in his own country. He associates a number of places in it with that. Take the case of Lopburi, for instance.

Once an important seat of Khmer power, in the north of Thailand, it is associated by popular imagination with a number of *Rāmāyaṇa* episodes, a few more interesting of which may well be recounted here. After the victory over Rāvaṇa, Rāma decided to reward all those of his allies who had helped him. He assigned the kingdom of Laṅkā to Vibhīṣaṇa, that of Kiṣkindhā to Sugrīva, that of Pātāla to Jāmbavat, that of Buriram to Guha and so on. Last came the turn of Hanumān. Which territory could be given to him, thought Rāma. An idea struck him. He told Hanumān that he would shoot an arrow. Hanumān should follow it. Whatever place the arrow falls on would be his. Hanumān did as he was asked to. The arrow fell at Lopburi. As per Rāma's word that was to be his (Hanumān's) territory. But then it was uneven at that time. It had to be made fit for habitation first. Hanumān achieved this by levelling it with his tail. He then approached Viśvakarmā who laid a city for him there. It was over this that Hanumān began to rule. Incidentally the story has it that the entire land was burnt and reduced to chalk with the impact of the fall of the arrow and the particular patch where it dropped became green. The local people took it as highly sacred and began to remove therefrom the small green chips till the government intervened and put barricades at the patch including it among the protected monuments. Interestingly, the Lopburi area abounds in chalk which forms its principal export. Further, it is said that when Lakṣmaṇa was struck with Kumbhakarṇa's arrow Rāma asked Hanumān to bring a herb called Sapphaya, the Thai word for Sañjīvanī from the Chayanad Province. It being the time of the night, the great monkey could not identify it. He took up the whole mountain and flew past Lopburi which was on fire at that time. In the light of the fire he identified the herb and dropped the mountain. The place where he did so is at a distance of some 10 kms. from Lopburi and is called in Thai Khao Samo Khon

which means 'monkey dropped the mountain'.¹

It is due to the complete owning of the Rāma story, the *Rāmakien* or the *Rāmakīrti* by the Thais, that the names of the characters have come to differ from the original. A close look at the *Rāmakien* shows that with regard to the names of the places and personalities three distinct systems are in evidence. First, original names are preserved intact, e.g., Rāma, Hanumān and so on. Second, names entirely different from those in the original are used, e.g., Kuccī for Mantharā, a derivative, in all probability, of Sanskrit Kubjī or Kubjā, Svāhā for Añjanā, Kallācanā for Ahalyā, Kākanāsura for Tāḍakā, Khukhan for Guha, Mongkut for Kuśa and Vajmr̥ga

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1. A little different version of the story is found in the *Rāmakien*. The victory over Rāvaṇa brought a large area under Rāma's rule. He decided to divide it among his loyal allies who had stood by him through thick and thin. He made Vibhīṣaṇa, the ruler of Laṅkā, Sugrīva, Guha and Hanumān that of Kiṣkindhā, Buriram and Ayuthayā, respectively and so on and so forth. Of all these it was Hanumān who found it hard to rule over his new country. Its lawful heirs being the descendants of Nārāyaṇa, as soon as Hanumān occupied the throne he felt a burning sensation all over his body, and the guards appeared to him to be so many javalines out to pierce his eyes. He at this left his throne and offered it to the rightful owners. Rāma then thought another way out to reward Hanumān. He shot an arrow and asked Hanumān to follow it. The arrow fell on a nine-peaked mountain reducing it to dust. Hanumān levelled it with his tail and raised a city wall. Rāma asked Viśvakarmā to lay a city on it which he did. It was given the name Nabapurī and Hanumān was made its ruler.

for Vālmīki. Third, a modified form of the original name is used, e.g., Satrud for Śatrughna, Kuperan for Kubera. One of the causes for such changes and modifications may be the phonetic peculiarities of the Thai language, the vowel *a* occurring in between two consonants in it is deleted leading to their conjunction while the one coming at the end of the word is made silent as in Bengali. Thus *garuḍa* is pronounced in Thai as *khрут*. Moreover, being fundamentally a monosyllabic language, with an inclination to stick to the sound of the word rather than the correct spelling, Thai adopts a modified form of a word with a part of it unpronounced. Thus Lakṣmaṇa is written as Lakṣmana but pronounced as Lak retaining the sound of the first syllable only and deleting all others. The same thing has happened with Pulastya, Vibhīṣaṇa, Vidyujjiha and Mandodarī, etc., which are pronounced in Thai as Lastian, Bibhek, Chiuha and Mando, respectively. *Bha* is pronounced in Thai as *pha*. So Bharata becomes Phrot. Rāvaṇa is nowhere called as such. He in the *Rāmakien* is Totsakan, Sanskrit Daśakaṇṭha. There are certain names which have only minor variations, e.g., Sīdā, Sanskrit Sītā, Sukrīp, Sanskrit Sugrīva, Phālī, Sanskrit Vālī, Intharachit, Sanskrit Indrajit, Kumphan, Sanskrit Kumbhakariṇa and so on. It may be mentioned here incidentally that some of the modified names do not go well with the Thai phonetic system. Though many Thai works refer to the god of wealth as Kuvera, in *Rāmakien* he is invariably referred to as Kuperan which is the Tamil form and may easily be recognized as a remnant of Tamil influence. The same may be said of Guha which in Thai becomes Khukhan. While talking of the names it may be pertinent to mention here that the *Rāmakien* has a number of new names to designate characters with no corresponding ones in the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa*. Such for instance, are : Benchakāi, Maiyarāb, Mālivaggabrahmā, Suvannamacchā, Macchānu, Mahāpāl, Debāsura and Unarāj.

Rāmāyaṇa Story :

Now, a word about the story of the Thai *Rāmāyaṇa*. Unlike the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa* which is divided into Kāṇḍas, it is one continuous whole. It has no sub-divisions, even where it is in the form of a dramatic poem, of acts or scenes. For purposes of analysis the *Rāmākien* story is divided into three parts. The first part describes the creation of all beings, human, demoniac and simian. It begins with the third incarnation of Nārāyaṇa. The story goes on to describe the birth of king Anomatan, the founder of the dynasty of Ayodhyā, who was succeeded by his son Ajapāl who in turn was followed by his son Daśaratha, father of Rāma. Next is described the birth of Rāma, his brothers and Sītā. Then is taken up for description the origin of the demons, their kingdoms, their families, their conflicts which is followed by the description of the creation of Laṅkā, the birth of Rāvaṇa and his marriage with Mandodarī and the birth of the simian characters. In the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa* while the birth of the human and simian characters is described in the Bālakāṇḍa, the birth of the demon is described in the Uttarakāṇḍa.

After describing the origin of the different characters the *Rāmākien* starts to unfold the main story, the sending away of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to forest to save the Ṛṣis from the trouble caused by the crow-demon Tāḍakā, the marriage of Rāma and Sītā, Rāma's banishment, Bharata's going to him and meeting him in the forest, Rāma's meeting with Śabarī and Agastya, his encounters with Śurpaṇakhā and other demons, Sītā's abduction, Rāma's meeting with Hanumān and Sugrīva and the killing by him of Vālin.

The second part deals with the preparations for the battle with Rāvaṇa, Hanumān's visit to Laṅkā and his exploits therein, the building of the causeway to Laṅkā, Vibhīṣaṇa's joining Rāma, the Benchakāi episode (a new episode), Rāma's encounter with Maiyarāb (a new episode), the fight with Kumbhakarna

and his defeat, Lakṣmaṇa's battle with Indrajit and the latter's death, the fight between Rāma and Rāvaṇa, the episode of Mālivaggabrahmā (a new episode), Rāvaṇa's meditation, his death at the hands of Rāma and the handing over by Rāma of the throne of Laṅkā to Vibhiṣaṇa.

The third part of the *Rāmakien* describes the quelling of an insurrection in Laṅkā by Rāma's brothers, the banishment of Sītā, the birth of her two sons, Rāma's fight with his sons (a new episode), Rāma's attempt to win Sītā back and the intervention of the gods to bring about reconciliation of the estranged couple. The story of the *Rāmakien* does not stop here. It goes on to describe the exploits of Rāma's sons.

The story in the *Rāmakien* differs from that of the *Vālmīkī Rāmāyaṇa* in two respects. One, some altogether new episodes are introduced in it which do not figure in the original narrative. Two, even where the incidents described are the same, there is difference in detail, major or minor. Since it is not necessary that the Thai narrative should be based on that of *Vālmīki* alone, this difference is inevitable. Grafting on a foreign soil also contributes to it. The local elements do creep in when something from outside is brought in. This is most noticeable in the case of Hanumān, the celibate monkey god of *Vālmīki*, who turns in the *Rāmakien* into a romantic hero making love with any pretty lady he comes into contact with, marrying her and begetting sons thereon. Rāma's *bhakta* he is, but not to the extent of self-denial. Recipient of the material reward from Rāma for the services rendered to him, he accepts the kingdom of Lopburi.

Unless the story of the *Rāmakien* is known, it will not

1. For the material for pp. 47-8 and 54-7 the author is indebted to the work of Santosh N. Desai : *Hinduism in Thai Life*.

be possible to appreciate fully the points of difference between the narratives in the *Rāmakiṇ* and in the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*. Full books on this have been written in English by at least three scholars, Mr. M. L. Manich Jumsai, Mr. J. M. Cadet who has primarily based himself on the bas reliefs of Wat Phra Jetubon and Swami Satyanand Puri, an emissary of Tagore in Thailand who spent long years carrying out a thorough study of Thai history and culture and by far the most knowledgeable of the Indian immigrants to that country. *Vālmīki*'s story being all too well known, an attempt will be made hereunder to put the spotlight only on such of the episodes as are entirely new to the *Vālmīki*'s narrative or those which differ materially from it. First we take up the new episodes.

The episode of Anomatan :

It is said that in times of yore a demon of miraculous powers of the name of Hirantayaksa lived on the mountain Cakravāla. He oppressed the gods who approached *Īśvara* for succour. *Nārāyaṇa* at the behest of *Īśvara* fought with him and killed him. On coming back to his abode of milk-ocean he saw a lotus on it and a beautiful child encased in its petals. *Nārāyaṇa* forayad to *Krailāsa* to dedicate it to *Īśvara* according to whose injunction, it named *Anomatan*, was to be the first king of the world. *Jambudvīpa* was chosen for his rule. His capital was *Ayodhyā* which was laid for him by *Indra* at the behest of *Īśvara* and was named on the first letters of the four *Ṛṣis* he (*Indra*) met on the way.

The episode of Benchakāi :

Rāvaṇa ordered *Benchakāi*, a demoness, to assume the form of *Sitā*, feign dead and float down the river near *Rāma*'s

camp with the intention to dupe Rāma into believing that his beloved wife was no more. The ruse succeeded for a while. Rāma going to the river to take his morning bath noticed the corpse and recognizing that to be that of Sītā fell into deep mourning. So did Lakṣmaṇa who came there along with Hanumān. The latter refused to accept that Sītā was dead. To test as to whether it was a corpse or not, he put it on lighted pyre. Shrieking Benchakāi leapt into the sky in her true form only to be dragged to the earth by Hanumān. Whipped by Sugrīva she revealed her identity. Coming to know that she was Vibhīṣaṇa's daughter Rāma forgave her in spite of the former asking him to kill her and ordered Hanumān to see her off to Laṅkā. While escorting her the gallant monkey made love to her who later bore him a son called Asuraphad.

The episodes of the quarrel between Nīlaphat or Nīla and Hanumān and of Suvannamacchā :

To reach Laṅkā it was necessary to build a causeway. The monkeys gathered round both the heroes, Nīlaphat or Nīla and Hanumān and the mighty work of laying a bridge over the ocean began. Nīla and Hanumān had settled between themselves the work to be done by each. Thus Hanumān was to set in position the stones that Nīla would pass on to him. Now, Nīla nursed a grievance against Hanumān on account of the bad treatment he thought he had meted to his uncle Jambū. Taking the present one as the right opportunity to take revenge he became overfast with the handing over of the stones which Hanumān with all his efficiency could not set in time. After some time the order of duties was reversed. In order to teach Nīla a lesson, Hanumān tied a stone each to his hair and began passing the stones onto Nīla much to his discomfiture. A quarrel ensued between the two then. It being an act of indiscipline and a bad example,

to the rest of the army, Rāma decided to punish both. Nīla he sent to Kiṣkindhā to act as Sugrīva's regent and to arrange for the supply of provisions to the army. Hanumān was charged with the completion of the causeway within seven days. The great monkey acted with speed. Stone after stone came to be hurled into the sea. The tumultuous noise of the whole operation reached Rāvaṇa's ears who getting restless sent his mermaid daughter Suvāṇṇamacchā to obstruct it. Suvāṇṇamacchā set about with her host to remove the rocks from their positions. Hanumān was surprised to find the rocks vanishing. He dived into the sea and saw Suvāṇṇamacchā and thousands of the fish at work to remove the rocks. Hanumān looked at the pretty mermaid and fell into love with her. She also responded to his love. The result was that before Suvāṇṇamacchā returned to her father she had become a mother to Hanumān's son Macchānu whom she discharged from her womb and left on the seashore for fear of her father.

The episode of Maiyarāb :

Rāvaṇa invited his friend, the invincible Pātāla king Maiyarāb to assist him in killing Rāma. Maiyarāb went to Rāma's camp and with the help of a sleeping powder made all his companions sleep. He kidnapped unconscious Rāma to Pātāla and thought of putting him into boiling water. After waking up everybody looked for Rāma. Vibhiṣaṇa applied his mind to the problem and came to know that it was the work of Maiyarāb. He asked Hanumān to go to Pātāla to rescue Rāma. Hanumān met with many obstacles on the way, an elephant, a fiery mountain, a swarm of mosquitoes. He overcame them one by one and was finally able to reach Pātāla, find out Rāma with the help of his son Macchānu, a mermonkey born of a mermaid Suvāṇṇamacchā whom Maiyarāb had adopted as his son. Hanumān gave a

fight to Maiyarāb, killed him and brought Rāma back to his camp.

The episode of the judgment of Mālivaggabrahmā :

When one demon after another was falling in the face of Rāma's or Hanumān's superior power, Daśakaṇṭha became extremely worried and thought of some way to get rid of Rāma. One way was to persuade his grandfather Mālivaggabrahmā or Mālivarāja Brahmā, the lord of gods, Gandharvas, Nāgas and other supernatural beings, the Brahmā of unfailing words to pronounce a curse on Rāma. Daśakaṇṭha sent for him through the demons Nanyavik and Vāyuvek and requested him to pronounce his judgment on his dispute with Rāma who had invaded his country.

To look impartial Mālivaggabrahmā descended along with his host of gods neither in the Rāma's camp nor in Laṅka but in the battlefield which according to him belonged to neither of the disputants. Daśakaṇṭha placed his charge of the invasion of his country by Rāma before him. Just as he was, he would not pronounce his judgment unless the gods witnessed the trial and Rāma was given a chance to reply to the accusation. He also wanted to listen to Sītā who was brought into his presence in the company of the monkeys and the demons. On her evidence and on that of the gods Mālivaggabrahmā found Daśakaṇṭha guilty and cursed him to death by Rāma's weapon. With this Daśakaṇṭha's plan got totally misfired.

The episode of Rāvaṇa's soul :

It is at more than one place in the *Rāmakien* that the soul being kept separately from the body is mentioned. Unless it is destroyed first, a person cannot be killed, as per its version. The same thing happens also in the case of Rāvaṇa. When the

great fight between Rāma and Rāvaṇa took place Rāvaṇa remained immune to all the weapons of the former who showed unusual valour. Rāvaṇa's arms and heads were all cut one by one to grow and join again. Vibhīṣaṇa knew that it would go on like this unless Rāvaṇa's soul kept in a receptacle with Goputra, the latter's preceptor in his Āśrama was crushed first. Hanumān offered to do the job cautioning Rāma, *inter alia*, that in accomplishing it he might have to use many tricks and that he should not doubt his integrity. Together with Aṅgada he left for Goputra's Āśrama. He met the Ṛṣi, a simpleton at that, and told him that he had been illused by Rāma and that he would like to desert him and join Rāvaṇa who knew how to treat his allies best but on his own was afraid of going to him lest his very sight should enrage him and provoke him to finish him off and was requesting him (Goputra) to take them to Rāvaṇa's presence to put in a word on his behalf and on behalf of his companion to him (Rāvaṇa). At Hanumān's caution that Rāma might steal away the receptacle, the Ṛṣi took it along with him. At the city gate came up a difficulty. If the receptacle was taken in, the soul would immediately fly to Rāvaṇa to meet him. At Hanumān's suggestion, it was decided to leave the receptacle with Aṅgada. Hanumān and Goputra entered Laṅkā. After a while Hanumān on the pretext of giving instructions to Aṅgada with regard to saving himself from the demons who might mistake him for an enemy, came back to him, created with his miraculous power a replica of the soul and put it in the receptacle in place of the original one which the latter (Aṅgada) at his behest buried beneath the sea shore. Rāvaṇa's soul having been buried, there was no obstacle left for Rāma in killing Rāvaṇa. In the fight that ensued the former finished off the latter.

The episode of Mahipal Debasura :

After the death of Rāvaṇa, his friend Mahipal Debasura, king of Chakravāla, came to visit him, ignorant of what had

happened to him. Coming to know, of his death on arrival he became furious and besieged the city of Laṅkā. Vibhīṣaṇa who was then occupying the throne under the name Dasaigri-vangsh did not possess the miraculous powers of Rāvaṇa. It was because of this that it was arranged by Rāma when he enthroned him that he would send every week an arrow to him and if he felt that anything was going wrong, he should attach a note to it. When the city was besieged, Vibhīṣaṇa attached a note to the arrow which Rāma saw and deputed Hanumān who was then ruling over the city of Nabapurī under his new name of Phya Anujit to help Vibhīṣaṇa. Hanumān fought Mahipal Debasura and tore him into two. Much to his amazement the portions united. At last at Vibhīṣaṇa's behest he tore open his (Debasura's) chest and the latter fell dead.

The episode of the insurrection in Laṅkā :

When Mandodarī became one of Vibhīṣaṇa's queens, she was in the family way. She in course of time gave birth to a son. Coming of age and coming to know from his governor Varanisura as to what had happened to his father Rāvaṇa, he, named Bainaśurivangsh, was seething with the feeling of taking revenge. He went to king Chakravartī, the ruler of Malivan, a friend of his father who took him for his own son, invaded Laṅkā and put Vibhīṣaṇa behind the bars. Hanumān and his son Asuraphad came to Kiṣkindhā, made all arrangements for the army and proceeded to Ayodhyā where Bharata and Śatrughna joined them. They, all of them, with their armies marched to Laṅkā. In the battle Bainaśurivangsh was killed and Vibhīṣaṇa set free.

Minor Differences between the Thai Rāmāyaṇa and the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa :

Having spoken of the new episodes that have been introduced into the Thai Rāmāyaṇa, it will be pertinent to

analyse the Thai Rāma story from the point of view of variations in it from the Rāmā story of Vālmiki. There are incidents in it such as the birth of Rāvaṇa, Vālin's fight with Māyāvin, Rāma's birth, his encounter with Tāḍakā, his marriage with Sītā, the Paraśurāma episode, Rāma's exile and the part played in it by Mantharā, Daśaratha's fight with Śambara and the part played in it by Kaikeyī, Rāma's contact with Guha, his encounter with Virāḍha, Śūrpaṇakhā's overtures to Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, Sītā's abduction and Jaṭāyu's fight with Rāvaṇa which have some differences though not very big with Vālmiki's treatment of them.

These differences could be illustrated by taking up a few of the above instances. Let us first take up the incident of the birth of Rāvaṇa and then other incidents. In both the Thai *Rāmāyaṇa* and the Vālmiki *Rāmāyaṇa*, Rāvaṇa and Kuvera are said to have a common father though the names differ in both. In the Thai *Rāmāyaṇa* he is called Lastian, Sanskrit Pulastya and in the Vālmiki *Rāmāyaṇa* Viśravas. Same is the case with Rāvaṇa's mother. In the Thai *Rāmāyaṇa* she is called Rajata and in the Vālmiki *Rāmāyaṇa* Kaikasī. Rajata has no connection with Sumālin mentioned as the father of Kaikasī in the Vālmiki *Rāmāyaṇa*.

In the Vālin's fight with the bull Māyāvin, the story is common in both the *Rāmāyaṇas*, the Thai and the Vālmiki, upto the point where Sugrīva is placed at the entrance of a cave wherein the fight takes place. The Thai *Rāmāyaṇa* gives a slightly different turn to the story when it introduces the element of rain. Vālin had conveyed it to Sugrīva that if he saw lighter blood coming out of the cave he should take it that it was his (Vālin's) and that he had been killed by Māyāvin. If instead, he saw thicker blood in its place, he

should conclude that Māyāvin had been killed. Now rain played havoc with the scheme. On account of it Māyāvin's blood became lighter. Seeing it coming out Sugrīva thought that it was Vālin who had been killed. To prevent Māyāvin's exit, he blocked the cave and left. Vālin after finishing off Māyāvin found it hard to come out and was very angry with Sugrīva.

In the description of the birth of Rāma the Thai *Rāmāyaṇa* does not give the name of the sacrifice which Daśaratha performs for begetting sons unlike the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa* which mentions it as Putreṣṭi. Again, the Ṛṣi who assists in the performance of the sacrifice is Kalaikoli in the Thai *Rāmāyaṇa* while he is Ṛṣyaśṛṅga in the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa*. Further, the devine food is rice balls in the Thai *Rāmāyaṇa* while it is Pāyasa in the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa*.

As for the incident of Rāma's marriage with Sītā, the Thai *Rāmāyaṇa* says that she (Sītā) has a look at Rāma from the balcony, who is shown conscious of it. The Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa* has nothing of it.

Major differences between the Thai Rāmāyaṇa and the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa :

The variations in the Thai *Rāmāyaṇa* from the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa* are quite substantial with regard to certain incidents, such as the account of the birth of Vālin, Sugrīva, Hanumān and Aṅgada, Rāma's meeting with Hanumān, Hanumān's departure to Laṅkā, his meeting with Sampāti and Rāvaṇa, the building of the causeway to Laṅkā, Aṅgada's meeting with Rāvaṇa, the order, the account and the frequency of the battles, Rāma's return to Ayodhyā, the distribution of awards, banishment of Sītā, the birth of her two sons and the reconciliation of Rāma and Sītā.

We take up only a few here by way of illustration. The incident of the banishment of Sītā the two versions describe quite differently. In the Thai *Rāmāyaṇa* Adul, a demoness, the daughter of Śūrpaṇakhā, the lady disfigured by Lakṣmaṇa, working as a palace maid with a view to wreaking vengeance on Rāma and Sītā for the wrong done to her mother entices Sītā to draw a picture of Rāvaṇa which Rāma happens to see and which makes him suspicious of her fidelity.¹ He assigns Lakṣmaṇa the task of killing her. He on his orders takes her to the forest but lacks the will to commit the ghastly act. He leaves her and brings to Rāma the heart of a deer as a proof positive for the carrying out of the assignment. Sītā continues to live in the forest. Rāma remains for long unaware of the fact that she is alive. In the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* Rāma banishes Sītā for fear of public censure. Lakṣmaṇa takes her to the forest but does not leave her alone. He tells her about the Āśrama of Vālmīki nearby.

The Thai *Rāmāyaṇa* shows Sītā to be very angry with Rāma for the wrong done to her while it depicts Rāma as

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1. Dr. Laxmi Narain Dubey of the Hindi Department of the University of Sagar told the writer of these lines in private conversation of a very interesting parallel of the incident in a Bundelkhandi folk song. After Rāvaṇa had been vanquished and Sītā reunited with Rāma, she visited the forest. Her friends coaxed her in order to satisfy their curiosity to draw a portrait of Rāvaṇa which she did with cowdung. As she had sketched his figure upto the waist, there appeared Rāma, recognized the figure to be that of Rāvaṇa, suspected Sītā's fidelity and ordered her expulsion.

sad and sorrowful in separation from her. One day Īśvara was having an assembly of gods in Mount Kailāsa. He was concerned at the fact that Rāma who had brought joy and happiness to the three worlds by controlling the demons should be leading a miserable life. Wanting to attempt a reconciliation of the estranged couple he sent for Rāma and Sītā. He noticed Sītā's anger and asked Rāma to beg pardon of her appealing at the same time to her softer feelings. Sītā at first did not relent. She could ill afford to be with a jealous and a cruel person. She had been too badly hurt to forget or to forgive. But at Īśvara's intercession she consented at last to accept Rāma. Thus were united the long-separated husband and wife.

The account of the birth of Sītā's sons differs completely in the two versions. In the Thai *Rāmāyaṇa* Sītā during her exile is described as living in the hermitage of the sage Vajmṛga, the Vālmiki of the Vālmiki *Rāmāyaṇa*. A son is born to her and is named Mongkut. The second son the sage Vajmṛga created through a miracle. The story has it that Sītā left one day Mongkut in the care of the Ṛṣi and went out to gather fruits and flowers. She came across certain monkey mothers. Out of solicitude for them she asked them to be careful with their babies lest they fell. The monkey mothers retorted that they were certainly better than her who had entrusted her son to the care of a Ṛṣi with his eyes closed in meditation. Sītā rushed back to the hermitage and brought the baby along with her. When the Ṛṣi opened his eyes after meditation, he, not finding the baby around, created another one by his miraculous power. When Sītā came back, the Ṛṣi told her everything and said that the new baby created by him would be Mongkut's playmate. He

gave it the name Lava.¹

In the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa Sītā is described to give birth to two sons who are Kuśa and Lava, respectively.

1. Interestingly enough, the *Ānandarāmāyaṇa* has much the same version of the birth of Sītā's sons as the Thai *Rāmāyaṇa*. In its Janmakāṇḍa Section (Canto 4, verses 21-86). It mentions that Sītā had only one son Kuśa, so named by Vālmīki because of the sprinkling of the holy water on him with the Kuśa grass. Rāma himself came at his birth at night by his aerial car Puṣpaka, performed the birth rites with the help of a small number of Brahmins, gave all types of gifts and left with the instruction that in no case should the news of his visit to the hermitage of Vālmīki were to be given out. While in the hermitage he was joined by his parents-in-law Janaka and Sumedhā who stayed on even after his departure. One day Sītā thought of having bath in the river. Her son she left to the care of Vālmīki. On her way she saw a mother monkey carrying its litter of five on its person. This made her compare herself with it. She thought that it, even though an animal, was carrying all its litter on her while, she, a human being had left her only child back in the hermitage. Cursing her indiscretion, she retraced her steps back to the hermitage. As it happened, Vālmīki had gone out at that time to make water while the other Brahmachārins were away for some other work. Sītā picked up the young one and went out. When Vālmīki on coming back did not find the child he got scared of the possible curse of Sītā and created a double of him. He told Sītā of everything when she came back after

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The Vālmīki incident of Sītā's being entombed in the earth is described differently in the Thai *Rāmāyaṇa*. Though

bath with her son to find another one in the hermitage. He offered it to her who accepted it as her son. He gave it the name Lava created as he was by the latter by Lavas ; wool, or quails. Both the young ones grew together as brothers in the hermitage.

The *Kathāsaritsāgara* version (IX, 86-93) slightly differs from the above and the *Rāmakien* (Thai *Rāmāyaṇa*). Sītā took Lava one morning along with her when she went out for bath. Vālmīki thought that it might have been carried away by a wild animal. He then created the like of him with Kuśa grass. When Sītā returned with Lava, he told her everything. The child created with Kuśa grass was named Kuśa by Vālmīki. Both the children grew together and received from Sītā and Vālmīki the same affection.

It appears that it is the *Ānandarāmāyaṇa* version which migrated to Thailand and came to be accepted there. That could possibly be its source, for it is the only version of its kind in the entire Sanskrit literature which is almost the same as the Thai version minus the incident of the solicitude of Sītā for the mother monkeys and their taunt to her. The other nearest approximation to it is the *Kathāsaritsāgara* version. The latter differs from the *Ānandarāmāyaṇa* and the Thai versions in that it is Lava who is mentioned there as Sītā's real son while it is Kuśa who is said there to be Vālmīki's creation. Further, in it Sītā takes Lava along with her of her own accord and not under the prick of the monkey mothers. Still

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Rāma had himself banished Sītā out of a feeling of jealousy and suspicion and ordered her killing he felt lonely without her. When he came to know that she was alive he wanted that she should be with her. To this she did not agree. She, however, came when she was informed that Rāma had died. But when she found him alive, she was furious and requested Mother Earth to take her in. She went thus to Pātāla. Hanumān was sent by Rāma to bring her back but in vain. She continued to live in Pātāla till her reconciliation with Rāma was attempted by Īśvara. There is difference between the two *Rāmāyaṇas*, the Thai and the Vālmīki, in another aspect also. It is the new names and the titles that are given by Rāma to the different allies at the time of rewarding them with different kingdoms after the victory over Rāvaṇa. Thus Vibhīṣaṇa is given the name Dashagirivangsh Bangshabrahmadhiraj Rangsang, Sugrīva the name Phraya Vaiyavangsha Mahasuratej Ruangsari, Guha the name Phraya Khukhandhipati, Hanumān the name Phraya Anujit and so on. Here we see the local tradition asserting its influence. The kings on ascending the throne would assume different names and titles. This should be so in the case of as of the *Rāmāyaṇa*

further, Vālmīki creates Kuśa under the feeling that Lava had been carried away by a wild animal. It agrees with the *Ānandarāmāyaṇa* and the Thai versions in that it accepts Sītā as having only one son, the other being created by Vālmīki by his miraculous power. It appears that there was a story in circulation in India in some period which accepted Sītā as having had only one son, the other having been created by Vālmīki to compensate his supposed loss for one reason or the other and it is this which might have travelled over to Thailand.

characters also as occupied the thrones. High flown names and titles were thus coined and assigned to them.

Rāmāyaṇa in Art :

In dealing with Thai art, it is better to be a little familiar with the history of Thailand which is divided broadly in seven periods, the Dvaravati period, 6th or 7th-11th Cen. A.D., the Srivijaya period in southern Thailand, 8th-13th Cen. A.D., the Lopburi period circa, 11th-13th Cen. A.D., the Sukhothai period, 13th-14th Cen. A.D., the Ayuthaya period, 17th-18th Cen. A.D., the Thonburi period 1767-1782 A.D. and the Bangkok period from 1782 to date. Now, so far as the Dvaravati and Srivijaya periods are concerned, no paintings or stone carvings of the scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa* have been found in Thailand. It is in the Lopburi period that the *Rāma* story begins to appear. This was the period when the Khmer influence spread from Cambodia to the northeastern, eastern and central parts of Thailand. As the Khmers practised Hinduism more than Buddhism except in the 12th-13th Cen. A.D., the Hindu religious tradition with a powerful component of Vaiṣṇavism in it became more active at this time. *Rāma* being an incarnation of Viṣṇu, his story came to be depicted in stone pediments and lintels of the many shrines built by them in different parts of Thailand. The best instance of the delineation of the *Rāma* story in stone is provided by Prasad Panom Rung, the Panom Rung Temple of Thailand. It has on its lintels and gables, both inside and outside the sanctuary or on stones once forming the part of the structure but now separated from it and lying in the open such scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa* as the killing of Mārīca in the deer form, the abduction of Sītā by Rāvaṇa, the presentation of the chopped off head of Indrajit to Mandodarī, the chaining of *Rāma* and Lakṣmaṇa

by the Nāgapāśa and the wailing of the monkeys for that reason, the fight between Rāma and Rāvaṇa and the former's triumphant return to Ayodhyā. On a stone now lying in the open is depicted the scene of two men looking like hermits with their matted hair together with a lady in between. The men possibly are Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa and the lady Sītā. The carving in all likelihood depicts their life in the forest.

Just as in the Panom Rung Temple so in the Pimai Temple in spite of its having been built for Mahayana Buddhism in 1108 A.D., many stone pediments and lintels of the porches of the main sanctuary, of the southernmost forechamber and the galleries are carved with scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The stone lintel on the western side of the forechamber carries a scene of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa in Nāgapāśa. Bewailing monkeys are shown surrounding him. The lintel underneath the stone pediment of the western porch of the main sanctuary depicts the scene of the construction of a causeway to Laṅkā where one can see monkeys dumping stones into the ocean that is full of sea animals such as fish, crocodiles and mythical aquatic monsters. The northern porch of the main sanctuary has on the pediment an unidentified scene from the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Two scenes are sculptured on the pediment and the lintel of the eastern porch of the main sanctuary. The one on the pediment might illustrate the descent of Rāvaṇa's grand uncle to adjudge the dispute between his grand nephew and Rāma, a typically Thai insertion as pointed out earlier, in Rāma story and the scene on the lintel probably represents the episode of the chopping off by Lakṣmaṇa of the nose and the ear of Śūrpaṇakhā while Rāma and Sītā, the latter resting in the lap of the former, look on. The lintel on the southern forechamber in front of the main sanctuary has a scene of a number of persons seated in a boat which might represent Rāma's

return from Laṅkā by sea after doing away with Rāvaṇa. Two stone lintels which are probably fall-outs from the galleries surrounding the main sanctuary appear to be carrying scenes most probably from the *Rāmāyaṇa*. One of these shows two persons, probably Rāma and Sugrīva borne on a palanquin by monkeys back into the town, presumably after killing by the former of Vālin, the latter's brother.

During the Lopburi period small bronze figures of Hanumān used as standards on top of wooden poles have been found.

In the Sukhothai period (13th-14th Cen. A.D.) which has earned the distinction of being the most beautiful period of Thai art very few scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa* have been discovered in sculpture and painting in spite of the Rāma story being well-known as evidenced by the presence of the word Rāma in the name of the third and the well-known king of the Sukhothai dynasty Ramakamhaing the Great as also the stone inscriptions of the period.

As for the Ayuthaya period (14th-18th Cen. A.D.) which was the most glorious period of Thai history, very little of the Rāma story has survived in sculpture and painting because of the loss of the city to the Burmese in 1767 who completely burnt it down. The acquaintance with the story in that period, however, is testified by the occurrence of the word Rāma in the official name Ramathibadi I, Sanskrit Rāmādhipati, of U Thong, who founded Ayuthaya in 1350 A.D.

In the Thonburi (1767-1782) and the Bangkok (1782) periods the kings themselves being great scholars of the *Rāmakien*, it was but natural that the interest of the monarchy in Rāma story should come to be reflected in art, particularly painting and sculpture. The best paintings of the period are

found in Wat Phra Kaeo, popularly known as the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. One hundred and seventy-eight in number and painted along the galleries going round the Temple, they depict the *Rāmāyaṇa* story from the birth of Sītā to the final war of her two sons with the help of two of Rāma's younger brothers. Apart from the mural paintings pieces of interest from the Rāmāyaṇic point of view are the stone statues of Hanumān and Suvarṇamaccha.¹ These can be seen in the northeastern angle of the Ubosoth, Upasatha. They probably belong to the reign of the third king of the present dynasty. In the reign of the fourth king, there were no major sculptures or paintings based on the great epic, though he happened to be the author of a dramatic poem on one of its episodes himself. Rāmāyaṇic scenes came to appear from his time onward as minor arts, a situation that continues even to this day. These scenes are found embroidered on fans, pillow covers, or found engraved on neillo works such as belt heads, cigarette cases or appear on trays or other items of crockery and many other kinds of objects that serve as great attraction for tourists. The other Rāmāyaṇic pieces of art belonging to the period under reference are the basreliefs, as many as one hundred and fifty-two in number, found in Wat Phra Jetubon, the Funerary Temple of the present ruling dynasty of Thailand, which depicts the central episodes of the Rāma story.

The mural paintings in the Vihara of Wat Nang Phya in Phitsnulok in northern Thailand and the marble panels, as many as one hundred and fifty-two, relating the Rāma story, after king Rāma's version of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, in clockwise direction from Rāvaṇa's abduction of Sītā to the pursuit by

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1. A half female and half fish character believed to be Rāvaṇa's daughter and a fish mother.

Rāma, the fight among the demons and the monkeys, till the catching of Rāvaṇa's friend Sahasteja by Hanumān. Apart from the marble panels, the wooden panels of the ordination hall of Wat Po referred to above, represent again the episodes from the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The northern panel of the eastern door on the north depicts the scene of Hanumān breaking the neck of Indrajit's elephant mount when he (Indrajit) disguises himself as Indra and the southern panel depicts the scene of the destruction by Lakṣmaṇa of the invulnerable ceremony of Indrajit. The northern panel on the southern door on the east represents the episode of the fight between Hanumān and Sahasteja whereas the southern panel of Hanumān and Virunchanibang. The first panel of the southern door on the West shows the scene when Rāvaṇa sprinkles magical water on the corpses of his dead relatives and friends to revive them and the second of the death of Rāvaṇa himself. The western door on the north represents the story of the two sons of Rāma. The other famous wooden carving connected with the *Rāmāyaṇa* in Wat Po appears on a pediment of a Vihāra representing the scene of Hanumān's fight with the two sons of Rāvaṇa, who were born, according to Thai version, from an elephant mother.

The National Museum of Bangkok has a couple of interesting pieces of art connected with the Rāma story. Just in front of it in the open stands a majestic figure of Rāma with a bow in hand symbolizing as it does the love of the Thais for the great hero. Inside the building the most noteworthy object, among others is a wooden screen painted in gold and black lacquer, a relic of the period of the first king of the present dynasty. On one side of it is depicted the scene of Indrajit who transforms himself into Indra and shoots arrows that turn out to be groups of Nāgas and on the other Rāvaṇa's death.

Before concluding the present study it is pertinent to emphasize once again the fact that the *Rāmakien* still exerts pervasive influence on Thai life. It supplies the Thais with a ceaseless flow of figures, of phrases, of ideas, of inspirations, of works of art. A song of the human heart, it has a kind of romantic charm for them and gives them unbounded joy and happiness even in the present times when the glory of the east is being fast shadowed by the glamour of the west.

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BRAHMINS IN THAILAND

Though a Buddhist country now, Thailand has a good deal of Hinduism in it having once come deep under its influence. Religion in Thailand is a queer admixture of animism, Hinduism and Buddhism. Apart from the whole host of Hindu gods and goddesses whom the Thais revere, there is a regular community in it called Brahmin. Though intermarried and speaking only Thai, its members are distinguishable by the particular mode of dress and habits. They are fair in complexion generally. Their dress is all white : white coat, white Dhoti, white socks and white canvas shoes. They sport a big tuft of hair like their counterparts in South India.

Interestingly, not everybody born in a Brahmin family is called Brahmin. This appellation is attached to those only who have had the initiation, *Dīkṣā*, in Brahminhood. The authority to initiate vests in the *Rājaguru*, the Royal Priest or in his absence the *Huana Phram*, the Chief of the Brahmins. There are at the moment 27 Brahmins in Thailand, 15 in the city of Bangkok and the rest in Provinces, though the number of those born in Brahmin families runs into several thousands.

The *Rājaguru* or the Royal Priest is picked up from among the Brahmins by the king. The Royal Secretariat gets into touch with the Brahmins who give their opinion to it in the matter. The few names that come up through this exercise are placed before the king by the Incharge of the Royal

Secretariat. The King picks up one of them and appoints him to the post. Each Brahmin gets a stipend of Baht 1000 or U.S. Dollars 50 per mensem from the king. The amount is too meagre to support a family—almost all the Brahmins are married and have families. Hence the Brahmins have no option but to supplement their income by engaging themselves in other avocations apart from following their traditional avocation of priesthood.

Thailand has no Rājaguru at the moment. After the death of the last one some five years back nobody has been appointed to the post. For carrying on routine work, however, a Huana Phram, a Chief of Brahmins, has been nominated.

For initiation to Brahminhood there is no age limit. Anybody can be initiated a Brahmin any time. The bar is only with regard to taking part in a Vidhi, rite. No Brahmin of less than 21 years can participate in it or for that matter conduct it.

The Vidhis or the rites which the Brahmins have to perform are many. The following six, however, are more prominent of them :

1. *The Annual Worship :*

It is of two kinds. One called Triyampavāya and the other Tripavāya. The Triyampavāya is connected with the worship of Isuan, Īśvara (=Śiva) and the Tripavāya with that of Naraya, Nārāyaṇa (=Viṣṇu).

The Triyampvāya has three stages : First, to invoke Īśvara to come to the earth. Second, to place the idol of the Lord in a swing with a mug in between the two pillars and make offerings of food like fried rice to Him, with the leftover to be distributed as Prasāda. Third to bathe the idol by pouring on

it lustral water and to invoke the Lord to sit on Haṁsa, swan, which is to take Him back to heaven.

The Triyampvāya is performed every year from Pauṣa 7 to Māgha 5, the period approximating to December third week to February third week. On Pauṣa 6 all Brahmins perform the self purification ceremony which entitles them to take part in Pūjā, worship. After this is performed the ceremony of Bhūśuddhi, purification of the place (of worship) and the Bhūtaśuddhi, purification of the beings. After these ceremonies have been performed, the Brahmins take a vow to stay in temple, sleep on the floor and to eat strictly vegetarian food [till the duration of the ceremony. It is in this duration itself that those wanting to become Brahmins are initiated into Brahminhood by the Rājaguru or the Huana Phram, the Chief of Brahmins. After initiation they also have to take the above vows. From Pauṣa 7 to 15, the full moon night, or roughly December 22 to 30 Gaṇeśa, Umā and Śiva are worshipped daily from 7 in the evening to about 12 in the midnight or sometimes to 2 or 3 in the early hours. The Pūjā starts with the worship of Navagrahas, the nine planets.

It is a belief with the Brahmins that Īśvara visits the world once a year for ten days. During this period they have to perform Triyampvāya to welcome Him. All gods on the occasion gather on the earth. According to some Triyampvāya is the new year festival of the Brahmins and a ceremony to invite Īśvara.

From all accounts it looks the Triyampvāya has South Indian origin. The very term Triyampvāya is a Thai variant of the Tamil Tiruvempavāya. In the Sukhothai period of Thailand's history the ceremony was performed under a different name of Nakṣatra. People during it would put

on festive clothes and decorate their houses. The idol of Íśvara was taken out in procession at night. So was that of Nārāyaṇa.

It has been said earlier that one of the stages of the Triyampvāya consists of placing the idol of the Lord on the swing. Connected with the swing part there is a very interesting story. It is said that after Brahmā had created the world he asked Íśvara (=Śiva) to protect it. Íśvara thought the earth was not strong enough to support the beings. To test its strength He just set one of His feet on it. He then asked the Nāgas to shake the mountains at the ends of the oceans. The Nāgas did as asked but the earth did not go under. The Lord was pleased at this. The two pillars of the swing are supposed to be the two mountains. A mug put in between the two pillars is supposed to represent the ocean.

Tripavāya :

It is a ceremony, as pointed out earlier, connected with Nārāyaṇa (=Viṣṇu). Like Triyampvāya it also has South Indian overtones, the word Tripavāya being only a phonetic variant of Tamil Tiruppavāya. Brahmins believe that when Íśvara had left, Nārāyaṇa came along. It was His turn now to receive worship. On the 6th of Māgha Brahmins gather at the Nārāyaṇa temple and offer worship to the deity. In the earlier period the Rājaguru in the course of the ceremony used to recite the Veda. The ceremony would conclude at the Vighneśvara temple.

The current mode of the ceremony is that on Māgha 5 evening nine monks start the worship of the Buddha. They continue with it even the following day. As they finish it, the Brahmins begin the tonsure of the young ones with their own

hands. This is only symbolic. They just cut a few hair. The rest of them the barber shaves off.

2. *The Ploughing Rite :*

It is performed every year in the month of *Vaiśākha*, the period between mid-April and mid-May. A definite date for this is decided every year by the *Rājaguru* or the *Huana Phram* with reference to the Almanac. The start to it is given by the Buddhist monks in front of the idol of the Emerald Buddha in Wat Phra Kaeo. The following day from 3 A.M. the Brahmin ceremony begins. Obeisance is first offered to *Gaurī*, *Dharaṇī* (= the earth) and *Gaṅgā* (= the river Ganges). After that some quantity each of the different types of foodgrains is put together and is besprinkled with water. Interestingly enough, this part of the rite has a typically Sanskrit name *Seka* even in Thai. Next at the auspicious moment the Brahmins carry the besprinkled foodgrains to the sprawling lawns of *Sanam Luang* near Wat Phra Kaeo (the Temple of the Emerald Buddha). At the appointed hour arrives there the King. For taking active part in the ceremony he deposes a dignitary as his nominee called *Phaja Raikna* in Thai. The nominee begins the ceremony with the worship of the bulls, the plough and the earth. He is duly helped in this by the *Rājaguru* or the *Huana Phram*. He then holds the ploughshare in his hand and moves forward. Ahead of him move the Brahmins. A few maids carrying some auspicious objects follow him. After the lawns have been ploughed the bulls are taken to a place where the following seven things are kept for them : wine, grass, black sesame seeds, water, corn, paddy and pulses. As is natural with them, the bulls seeing things pounce upon them. Any thing which they start eating first gives an idea of the type of crop the country is likely to have. If the bulls start eating the paddy,

corn or pulses first, it is believed that the crop would be good the year round. If, however, the bulls take to water first, the belief is that there would be floods and the crop would be damaged. If the bulls take to grass or sesame seeds first, it is believed that crop would be moderate, neither too much, nor too little. If by chance the bulls take to wine, the belief is that draught conditions would prevail leading to unrest everywhere. After the announcement of the future position of the crop on the basis of the aforesaid indications the ceremony comes to an end.

3. *Presenting an Elephant to the King .*

If a white elephant or an elephant with auspicious marks is found anywhere in the Kingdom of Thailand it has to be presented to the king, such an animal being deemed to belong to him as a matter of right. But before the formal presentation, worship has to be offered to it by a Brahmin according to prescribed rites.

4. *Royal Ceremonies :*

In all types of royal ceremonies Brahmins are invited. They play a particularly significant part in the coronation ceremony.

5. *Change of Dress of the Buddha Idol in the Temple of the Emerald Buddha :*

The dress of the emerald Buddha idol undergoes change thrice a year in keeping with the change in seasons. It is totally uncovered in summer, fully covered in winter and partially covered in the rainy season. The King himself changes the dress of the idol but the ceremony preceding it is conducted by the Brahmins.

6. *Ceremonies Connected with the General Public :*

These are the ceremonies like the laying of the foundation stone of a building, house warming, marriage and so on. In marriage a Brahmin pours lustral water on the hand of both the bride and the bridegroom. Both of them wear floral diadems with strings hanging down. The Brahmin conducting the ceremony ties a certain number of strings of one with the same number of another. In this way is accomplished in Thailand the rite of the tying of knot, the *Granthibandhana*, which in India is accomplished by tying the skirts of the garments of the couple. The Buddhist monks are no doubt present at the marriage ceremony but their role is restricted to doing recitations from the Buddhist sacred scriptures. It is the Brahmin whose role is pivotal in the marriage rite.

The Brahmins have their own temples where they carry on with their worship and other rituals. One of these is in the city of Bangkok. Situated in its very heart it is called the Brahmin Temple. It is said to be as old as the city of Bangkok, having been built with the founding of the city 200 years back. The very first shrine on entering that is that of *Brahmā*. Behind that are three shrines with idols of *Śiva*, *Gaṇeśa* and *Viṣṇu*, respectively. Earlier, the temple had many more idols. These were later removed to the National Museum where they are kept now. Black figure with golden ornamentation is their peculiarity. Particularly noteworthy among them are the idols of *Hari-Hara*, one idol combining the characteristics of the two deities, *Hari* (= *Viṣṇu*) and *Hara* (= *Śiva*). From the point of history of art these can be said to belong to the Sukhothai period. Not far from the temple is a gigantic swing called *Sao Ching Cha* in Thai. It is said that some thirty to forty years back the idols of *Śiva* and *Pārvatī* were brought once a year with great pomp and show from the palace and were placed on the wooden table of the swing. First the

Brahmin would give them the swing. Afterwards the King would take over from him and would continue giving the swing for some five minutes. After the swinging ceremony the idols would be taken back to the palace with the same pomp and show. It is said the King himself would carry the idols in his lap during both the forward and the return trips.

The other Brahmin temple in Thailand is at Nakhon Si Thammarat, Sanskrit Nagara Śrī Dharmarāja in the southern part. Older than the Bangkok temple, it too has a huge swing in its vicinity.

As said earlier, South India had something to do with the Brahmin community in Thailand. The Brahmins are said to have come from there and landed first at places like Nakhon Si Thammarat, Phuttalung and so on. Tradition has it that the Nakhon Si Thammarat Brahmin temple was set up with the landing of the Brahmins there and consequently the oldest in Thailand

Brahmins in Thailand, though helping in the ritual as they have come to understand it, have absolutely no knowledge of Sanskrit or the scriptures. Whatever texts they have are all in Thai script and are in highly corrupt Sanskrit or rather a semblance of it. Nominally they even have the Vedas or their portions with them.

The family of the Rājaguru does not know as to when its ancestors came from India. The late Rājaguru also had no idea of it. What he could tell was that there used to be a diary with him which was all eaten up by ants but for a portion of its last page which carried this much of legend that his ancestors had come two thousand years back from Ramanagar in India. Now, which place this Ramanagar is is difficult to say in the present stage of our knowledge.

PANOM RUNG SHRINE OF THAILAND

Prasad Panom Rung, a sanctuary of the Lopburi period, is situated in the District of Nangrong, in the Buriram Province of Thailand. Built on the hill of Panom Rung it derives its name from it. The hill is at present accessible by a good well-metalled road. The front of the sanctuary faces the east. Four terraces of steps lead up to it, each step being 22 metres wide. Further to them is a quadrangular space. To the north of the space is an elephant enclosure. Built of sandstone and laterite it faces the south, and has two porches, one to the east and the other to the west, each of 6.4 metres wide and 22.4 metres long. The front of the porch has a terrace. There are galleries on three sides. The passage within each gallery is 4.35 metres wide. There are three staircases on three sides. The structure might also originally have been a sanctuary, judging from the motif carved on the stone block, something that can be used for dating. There is a carving depicting *kāla* with hands emitting two five-hooded *Nāgas*. Behind the hoods of the *Nāgas* are hallows which are unconnected. Behind these hallows is ornamentation. If we compare this motif with the Khmer Art we find it that of the Kleangs style (circa 957-1007 A.D.). From this the structure can be dated back to 10th C.n. A.D. There is in addition a piece of quadrangular stone pillar which shows that the structure was renovated later. On this pillar are the bead like lotus petal motifs. But the most important motif is on the top of the said pillar. It is in the shape of a flower with four petals. This is very similar to be Khmer Art of Bayon style of about 1157-1207 A.D. From this one

can say that the eastern corner of the structure was reconstructed in the 12th Cen.A.D. About 50 metres to the west of it are three ponds.

The Main Building :

I. The remains of two Prangs (=towers) made of brick :

They were discovered through excavation not long back. They are situated on the northeastern corner within the galleries. One is quadrangular and faces the south. There must have existed a third Prang also which would have had its location on the opposite side of the one facing the south. It should have faced the north. It must have been removed before the construction of the big Prang. If we consider the motifs on the frame of the door that are still visible near the Prang that faces the east, these Prangs might have been constructed in the 10th Cen. A.D., the period of the Khmer Art of Bakheng period, because of the motif of big leaves and the octagonal pillar. There is one full leaf and two half leaves on each side. There is also a ring shape motif at the corner of each side. The dating of these Prangs in 10th Cen. A.D. is also supported by the two figures unearthed within the main Prang. The figures are of two goddesses, with heads and hands broken. Their lower garment is pleated, with its front part folded into a curve. This is very similar to the Khmer Art of Kohker period, i.e., 957-1007 A.D.

One of these goddesses is Brahmī, i.e., female Brahma. It is carved out of yellow sandstone. She has four heads and is sitting with right knee raised and hands folded. The lower garment is similar to that of the other goddess described above, which is a characteristic of the art of the 10th-11th Cen. A.D. The date of the three Prangs is indicated by the

motif of the door frame and by the figures of the two goddesses.

II. *Small Prang in the Southwestern Direction within the Gallery.*

This is quadrangular with indented corner. Each side is six metres wide. The outer part of the building is made of sandstone and the inner part of laterite. Considering the motif on the lintel and the gable, these Prangs should have been built in the middle of the 10th Cen. A.D. There is a hint of Khmer Art of Kleangs period (957-1107 A.D.), e.g., the lintel on the front has a figure of Kāla with its rectangular tongue protruding. Kāla is shown emitting garlands held by it with its hands. Above this is shown within a frame someone with knee raised. Below the garlands are motifs in the shape of leaves, both upside down and upside up. Each part of the lintel is divided by a hanging garland which in itself is divided into parts according to the parts of the lintel, a characteristic of Kleangs style. The gable above the lintel is similar to the gable in the Baphuan style, i.e., Kāla emitting garlands is not to be found and the Nāgas are without decoration on the head.

The lintel in the South has the same characteristics, i.e., it is similar to the lintel of the Khmer style of the Kleang's period combined with the Baphuan style. From this it can be said that the Prang belonged to about the 11th Cen. A.D.

Main Prang :

It is rectangular in shape and the entrance to it is from the east. There are porches in the four directions. The shrine has a number of interesting stone carvings. The gable on the porch in the eastern side has a massive figure of Naṭarāja, with exquisite floral decorative carvings around. Behind the gable described above is another gable which has certain figures. On the southern side of it is a figure of a Ṛṣi in a happy mood

with the right knee flat and the left raised. A rosary towards his left side is clear. Next to the Ṛṣi towards the left is some figure which being highly broken is not identifiable. After it is depicted a lady under a tree with two monkeys. Next to the lady is a figure of a human being with head missing. A hand of the human being appears to hold something looking like the beak of a bird. The scene could well be that of Jatāyu's fight with Rāvaṇa at Sītā's abduction. Further to that also there is something which being highly broken is not identifiable. In the northern side a lintel has scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa*; in the upper part it depicts the abduction of Sītā, in the lower part towards the right hand side the killing of Mārīca who is shown in the form of deer and towards the left hand something which has yet to be precisely identified. The figures there are those of a man with a bow in a posture of shooting, a pillar and most probably a bird the front part of which is broken. Originally it was thought that the scene carved is that of the lifting of bow by Rāma at the Sītā Svayamvara, but opinion changed later and it was thought that the carving represents some other scene for the figure is not shown in the posture of lifting the bow but in that of shooting an arrow. Prince Subhadradis Diskul floated the theory that it might be representing some such scene from the *Mahābhārata* as Arjuna's shooting a target at the time of the Draupadī Svayamvara though he himself the target in that episode was fish and not bird. His theory points out that though ingenious is hard to accept. It is inconceivable that one lintel will have two scenes, one from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the other from the *Mahābhārata*. There is an unsaid rule of coherence which would restrict this kind of mixing up. The natural presumption would be that the lintel carries all the scenes from one story, from that of Rāma. What then could this scene be? More likely it is, that it represents what goes in India by the name of *dhanurbhaṅga*

at Sītā Svayaṁvara. In Thai version Rāma is represented as taking up the bow and putting the string on it. Maybe, in some other version shooting is shown and the carving may be representing that.

On the southern side at the top is again carved the scene of the abduction of Sītā. Below is shown the scene of the return of Rāma to Ayodhyā as can be guessed from the musicians preceding him. Rāma is shown on horse back. He is also followed by some people. On one side of this carving at some distance is depicted the fighting scene.

The back side porch gable has three types of carvings one below the other. The first depicts human heads in a semicircular way. The one below that shows a row of monkey heads. The one still below these depicts the scene of the bringing of Indrajit's head to Mandodarī in her palace who is shown with her head tucked under her hand. Below this are shown some monkeys apparently happy at the consummation. On the right side are depicted two monkeys with opposite faces whose significance is not clear. On top of Mandodarī's palace are shown two parrots, probably a decorative motif. Inside the sanctuary, at the back of the porch from the back side is depicted the scene of a figure, head broken, tearing a person into two. For a time it had been thought that the carving represented the scene of Narasimha Viṣṇu in his incarnation of Man-lion tearing the demon Hiranyakaśipu but closer scrutiny has led to the view that it represents instead the scene of Kṛṣṇa tearing Kāṁsa. Similar carvings have been discovered from Cambodia where the figure tearing a person unmistakably is Kṛṣṇa.

On the four layers of the gable on the porch of the eastern section of the main Prang towards the south there are

different carvings. On the first layer is a clear figure of a bull and a god, the figure of god ; indistinct, only leg visible; riding on it in a procession. Only the legs of the members in the procession are visible, the bodies having become indistinct. What is distinct is a number of banners signifying probably the royal nature of the procession. On the second is the figure of a Ṛṣi. On the third is the scene of fighting among three persons, the middle one, with face indistinct, being of bigger size. The side figures, extremely distinct luckily, have knots at the head suggesting that the carving might be depicting the scene of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa fighting Rāvaṇa or some other powerful demon.

The porch between the eastern and the western sections towards the south has a carved lintel and a gable. The carving on the lintel depicts towards the left elephants with riders, towards the middle a human figure only the lower part of which is now visible (in the posture of one knee flat and one raised), towards the right some figures which are now indistinct. The gable has two figures, one clearer than the other. On top of these is a figure noticeable by the flat leg and the belly upto the navel. It looks the two figures below are carrying the person represented by the figure up.

Below both sides of the door have a figure each of a Ṛṣi sitting cross-legged, with knees raised and hands joining the chin in a reflective mood.

The eastern section of the Prang towards the south has three gables. On the first only the figure of a Ṛṣi each on both sides is seen. In between the Ṛṣis are two figures broken and indistinct. Upwards of the Ṛṣis is a figure in Mahārājalīlā posture (one leg hanging from the seat and the other flat). On both sides of this are shown ladies carrying some things that look like fans.

The second gable has a big figure of a demon carrying a woman in his left hand and a spear in the right one. He is shown standing with both legs wide apart. On both sides of the figure are depicted figures, one on each side, of princess. On the third gable is shown the procession of the monkey army towards the left and the human army -towards the right in opposit directions. In the human army only one depicted man is shown riding a horse and the rest are shown walking on foot. The same is the case with the monkey army. There too only one monkey is shown riding a horse while the rest are dipicted walking on foot.

Western gable of the western section of the main Prang has four layers. The first and the second layers depict nothing. The third layer has three figures under a tree, two on both sides carrying a bow who could be Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. The middle one looking like a lady could be Sītā. On the fourth gable is depicted a palace scene which is difficult to specify.

The western section of the main Prang towards the north has four gables. The first has figures with bows. Also noticeable in it are royal insignias like banners, depicting probably the scene of the return of Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā to Ayodhyā. The third has the figure of a person flourishing a sword. Below them are a number of monkeys flying about with one figure, probably that of chieftain of them, a Vānararāja, seated in the middle. Nothing is depicted on the second, while the fourth carries a big figure trying to drag something to it. There is a small figure also which looks terrified.

The eastern section on the northern side has four gables, the first one of which depicts the scene of the fight between demons and monkeys. The second one depicts something

which is difficult to specify at the moment because what is left of it is only two figures. The third gable has one big massive figure which is unidentifiable. The fourth gable is not clear.

On the eastern side the inside of the first room has some carvings on the lintel. A crocodile could be marked here on the Śeṣa bed in the ocean.

In between the eastern and western sections a lintel has figures of R̥ṣis with hands folded, knees raised in a cross-legged posture.

The western section porch towards the south has an inside lintel which has a figure, looking like a R̥ṣi, in the middle flanked by figures, looking like those of princes, on both sides. The middle figure could be that of king Nareन्द्रāditya. The second part of the inside lintel has five figures, all of them of R̥ṣis.

First room from back side and the room in the southern side have a panel each at the top which depict the scene of five R̥ṣis sitting cooss-legged, kneecs raised and hands folded in a posture of prayer. The panel in the room in the southern side is slightly different from the panel in the room just behind the porch in that an arrow is shown aimed at a bird which is turning for support on a pillar. The dress of the figure in the carving is of the style of late Baphuan (about 1057-1107 A.D.).

The R̥ṣi in the middle holds a rosary in his hand. His figure is a little bigger and is in a frame as compared with the two R̥ṣis each flanked on either side of him. This carving may have been done according to the Inscription found at the shrine long back. That Inscription mentions king Sūryavarmman II who is the builder of Angkorvat. It also says that one Hiranya built a golden statue of his father Nareन्द्रāditya who

was a Yogin meditating in a cave. It was Hiranya who probably was the person who made the Inscription and built the main Prang in dedication to his father. The R̥ṣi in the middle holding the rosary might suggest Īśvara or Narendrāditya, Prasad Panom Rung being certainly a Śaiva sanctuary because of one of the Inscriptions, the old one, found there starting with the salutation to Īśvara, Śiva, though the carving on the lintel on the other part of the Prang depicts the incarnation of Nārāyaṇa which in fact is not important in determining whether a particular sanctuary is a Śaiva one or a Vaiṣṇava one. This depends on the inner lintel. In the Prasad Hin Pimai, the innermost lintel depicts a scene from Mahāyāna Buddhism while the outer lintel depicts a scene from the Rāmāyaṇa. The Inscriptions which were found at the time when the excavation was carried out here before the reconstruction of the sanctuary have been read by now and one of them even published. As for the gallery encircling this Prang it might have been built in the same period. There are gates from four directions. The front gate is to the east. One cannot but mark the fact that the gallery to the east, south and west of the shrine is of sand stone while to the north is of laterite. Many of the sculptures of the late Baphuan style have been found in the sanctuary, the important ones being the sculptures of the gods of direction, only one face of sand stone and other three sides empty, (i.e., stone is carved only on one side, the other three sides are empty). Till now the sculptures of six gods of directions have been found. It is for the first time that one finds such deity in Lopburi period carved in separate stone. It is unfortunate that one did not find the original place of these (deities). May be, they were placed on the pillar in the open air according to the direction they guard and the oblation might have been put on the blooming lotuses carved on the pillar on which they stand. Those pillars, however, have not been found. It is possible

that they were made of wood and may have decayed in course of time. Those deities are as follows :

(1) *Indra on Elephant*. The guardian of the eastern direction, he wears *uṣṇīṣa*, *mukūṭa*, a necklace, an armlet and holds *vajra*. The necklace is decorated with a small garland. This shows the turning point from the late Baphuan style to the Angkorvat style which might have come about in 12th Cen. A.D. So we put forward the conjecture that this statue belongs to the late Baphuan period. Here the *Airāvata* has only one head and it is like an ordinary elephant. It wears necklace and bell. The elephant is using its trunk to drag something looking like a lotus stalk. The whole figure is within a frame. This has been found in the southeastern side of the main Prang.

(2) *Agni on Rhinoceros*. The guardian of southeastern direction, Agni mounted on rhinoceros is typically Khmer. Later it became typically Thai. The Indian one is on a goat. His dress is similar to that of Indra. He may hold a banner in his hand. The rhinoceros may wear a necklace and bell. This statue is found on the southeastern corner of the main Prang.

(3) *Varuṇa on fivehooded Nāga*. The guardian of the western direction, Varuṇa is generally shown on *Haṁsa* but as the god of rain he is shown riding a *Nāga* (the giver of rain) as well. His dress is similar to that of Indra and Agni. The only addition to that is a pair of anklets that he is made to wear. His dress is like that of the late Baphuan style, i.e., between 1057-1107 A.D. The hallow of the *Nāga* is made of one piece, a characteristic of the beginning of the Angkorvat period, i.e., about the middle of 17th Cen. A.D. *Varuṇa* is shown sitting in *Rājāñilā* posture, i.e., the right leg raised and the left placed horizontally. The weapon that he holds in his *Phand* is *Pāśa*, noose which has broken away. This statue has been found in

the southwestern direction of the main Prang.

(4) *Kubera on Lion*. The guardian of the northern direction Kubera is generally shown riding a Yakṣa with a club in his hand. He may sometimes ride a lion. The dress and the sitting posture of Kubera at Panom Rung are the same as that of Varuṇa. The lion is highly influenced by the Chinese Makara, e.g., the beard and the nose are long like the trunk of an elephant. The legs are more like the legs of birds than of four-footed animals. The hand of Kubera is holding something which may be a noose of snake. This statue is found in the western side of the main Prang.

(5) *Īśāna on Bull*. The guardian of northwestern direction, Īśāna is a part of Śiva. He holds a Triśūla in his hand and rides on bull like him. He is shown sitting in the Lalitāsana posture, i.e., the right leg hangs down and the left leg is placed horizontally. The dress is the same as that of the gods described above. This statue is found near the corner on the northwestern side of the main Prang.

(6) *Brahmā on three Haṁsas*. Sitting in Mahārājaliḷa posture with two hands in one of which he holds a lotus, he at first gives the appearance of Varuṇa, as the latter (Varuṇa) also rides on Haṁsa but the four faces of his make him to be Brahmā. This statue is found near the northern gate at the gallery. Brahmā is the guardian of the upper direction.

As for the lotuses carved on the top of the stones they are of the same shape, i.e., the whole blooming lotus is visible, the pollen is seen in round shape in the middle encircled by eight big petals with eight small petals intermittently. Each lotus is encircled by a bead-like motif. At the four corners are motifs of flowers distinctly carved. These flowers are framed by bead-like motif. The oblation might have been placed on the top of the lotuses. Apart from the statues of these guardians of the

quarters, are also found the statues of the vehicles of deities, e.g., bull, elephant, buffalo, rhinoceros, and swan. The deities on the vehicles were made of bronze and have long disappeared. Only the bronze latch remains. These vehicles are found within and without the main Prang. Therefore, it is difficult to say as to where their original places were. Apart from these vehicles are also found the statues of Dvārapālas which belong to the late Baphuan period with the reason described above. The main Prang, the gallery around it and these statues might have been built in the middle of the 12th Cen. A D., the turning point from Baphuan to Angkorvat.

Now a word about the Nāga bridge and the steps in front of the sanctuary in the east. It bears the characteristic of Khmer art of the beginning of the Angkorvat period (1107-1132 A.D.), i.e., on the ground there is a road paved with sandstone towards the Nāga bridge which is seven metres wide and sixteen metres long. Along both sides of the road are quadrangular pillars with unblown lotus shape at the top but into a row. Beyond this road is a Nāga bridge made into a cross. It is 5.2 metres wide and 20 metres long with three steps. The trail of the bridge is made in the shape of a five-hooded Nāga. The tops of the Nāgas are beautifully carved. So is the support of the bridge. The hallow of the Nāga is made into one piece. The rim of the hallow is a little indented continuously. From this it appears that the bridge might have been built in the beginning of the Angkor period which is contemporaneous with Prasad Bung Mala in Cambodia. Beyond the bridge are the stone-steps, 13 metres wide and 30 metres long with five terraces. These steps lead to an open space in front of the sanctuary. On both sides of the steps are four quadrangular bases.

There are two Vihāras of laterite near the main Prang.

One of these facing the south at the northeastern corner is 450 metres wide and 8.80 metres long while the other facing the west at the south-eastern corner is 9.5 metres wide and 7.6 metres long. The Vihāras must have been built in the reign of king Jayavarmman VII, the last great king of the Khmer empire in Bayon period (about 1057-1107 A.D.). The support to this view is lent by the statues of two goddesses found in the eastern porch of the main Prang. These two statues must have been placed on the same base, a rectangular one, with two holes for the statues, and a water passage in front. The identity of the goddesses is difficult to determine because the thing that they hold in their hands has broken away.

Conclusion

From what has been said above, it would appear that Prasad Panom Rung had begun to be built in about the 10th Cen. A.D. Additions were continued to be made to it from time to time till the end of the 12th or the beginning of the 13th Cen. A.D. It was an important sanctuary lying on the route from Angkorvat in Khmer empire to the region around Prasad Muangtam which might have been thickly populated judging from the pond which is found near it till today.

THE CITY OF LOPBURI

Introductory

Lopburi is a small town in the north of Thailand about 150 kms. from Bangkok. It has many monuments of historical and cultural interest. Some of them, particularly of the Khmers, are connected with Hinduism. It is said that for the good deeds done, Rāma assigned Hanumān the rule of Lopburi. Further it is said that when Lakṣmaṇa was struck with Kumbhakarṇa's arrow, Rāma asked Hanumān to bring medicine from a mountain called Sapphaya in Chayanad Province. It being the time of the night, Hanumān could not see the medicine. He got hold of the whole mountain and flew past Lopburi which was burning. In the light of the fire he could see the medicine. Having got it he dropped it (the mountain). It fell into the fire. It is now called Khao (=mountain) Sa mo (=monkey) Khon (= holding), about 10 kms. to the north-west of Lopburi.

About the name Lopburi there are different theories. One, that it is connected with Lava, one of the sons of Rāma. The other, that it is connected with Lavo, a tribe of Thailand. The original Lavapurī became Lopburi. The general opinion of scholars is in favour of the second theory.

The evidences found near the Artillery Centre and the Post office would point to Lopburi being the residential area since the New Stone Age. The archaeologists' hypothesis is that

Lopburi was a civilized city since the Dvaravati period, about 1500 years ago. 400 hundred years after that the Khmers became powerful and built a number of buildings in it such as the Hindu Shrine, the Kāla Shrine, the Prang Sam Yod and so on. With the loss of the power of the Khmers, Lopburi suffered neglect till the time of King Narai the Great who used to spend 8-9 months in a year over here. He built many temples and palaces in it.

Most probably the original town was situated to the east of the present Railway line. As the new town was being built a brick Stūpa without mortar and with some designs was discovered from the site of the present Post Office. So were discovered many stucco figures and lion faces and other things which are preserved in the National Museum of Lopburi.

About the beginning of the 10th Cen. A.D. the Khmers founded their capital at Yaśodharapura and soon expanded their dominions to govern Lopburi. A number of monuments of their time such as the Hindu Shrine, the Kāla Shrine, the Prang Sam Yod are found in it. After King U Thong founded the Ayudhya dynasty, he sent his son Prince Ramesuan to rule over Lopburi which by his time had become an important town near the Sukhothai frontier. After the death of King U Thong Prince Ramesuan went to Ayudhya to rule over there. He had, however, to yield the throne to his uncle King Borom Rachadhiraj I. Later Prince Ramesuan came back to Lopburi to resume its governorship. Altogether Ramesuan governed Lopburi for 38 years. After the Sukhothai Kingdom was amalgamated into the Ayudhya empire, Lopburi lost its importance. No prince of the Ayudhya dynasties ever came to rule over it.

In the reign of King Narai Thailand maintained strong foreign trade. A quarrel developed between him and the Dutch with the result that a Dutch Fleet came to blockade the Bay of Thailand. King Narai realized that Ayudhya was too near the sea. From the security point of view, thought he, it would be better to have a second capital and decided to set it up at Lopburi. He assigned the building of it to the French architects. After it was ready, he would spend some 8-9 months in a year in it and the rest of the period in Ayudhya. After Narai's death King Phetracha had his coronation at Lopburi but he abandoned it subsequently. It remained abandoned till 1734-1754 when King Boromkot came there to trap elephants and stayed probably in King Narai's palace. The city again fell into neglect till King Rama IV visited it. He entertained the same ideas as did King Narai. He thought that a seafaring nation like that of the Thais should have a second capital. Accordingly he had the town of Lopburi restored and renovated. He also got built there many new buildings. The Royal Palace was then named Phra Narai Ratcha Niwet. King Rama IV stayed there in 1856-1862. King Rama V also came there to stay a number of times. He gave away the Royal Palace to serve as the Lopburi Govt. House. In 1940 the Thai Govt. set up the new town of Lopburi to the east of the old city.

The city of Lopburi, the old one, is full of a number of important ancient monuments. The description of some of the more noteworthy of them from the point of view of Indian influence is being given as under :

The Kāla Shrine

It is found in the heart of Lopburi. It is called in Thai San Phra Kal (San=Śālā, Kal=Kāla, Śiva). Though the name would make it to be a Śive temple, it is actually the temple of [Viṣṇu. The image in it is that of Phra Narai, Nārāyaṇa or

Viṣṇu. The material used in the construction of it is laterite. It stands on a high pedestal and is also called High Shrine for that. The sanctuary of it has two images of Narai or Viṣṇu, one big and the other small, the small of the earlier period, from 7th-9th Cen. A.D. and the big in Lopburi style with a sandstone Buddha-like head of the Ayudhya period. Out of the four hands of the big one three are broken, two completely and the third partially. A very popular temple, it is visited by large numbers of devotees every day. Two Inscriptions in Mon now preserved in the Sivamokkha Phiman Hall of the National Museum, Bangkok, were found here. They concern the donation of slaves and certain objects like flags, chariots, oxen and clothes to a Buddhist monastery.

In the compound below around a tree a large number of monkeys strut about undisturbed. Food is offered to them to earn Bunya or Punya or merit.

Wat Indra

It is a deserted Wat opposite Wat Nakhon Kosa. Built in the Ayudhya period, the name of its founder is not known.

Wat Nakhon Kosa

It is near the Kāla Shrine to the north of the Lapburi Railway Station. It might originally have been a Hindu Shrine built by the Khmers. A Prang (= tower) of the 12th Cen. A.D. still stands in front of it.

Prang Sam Yod

Believed to be the symbol of Lopburi, it is a shrine of three Prangs. Hence the name Sam Yod (Sam=three). It is built in the Lopburi style between the years 950-1250 when the Khmers were still powerful. It is situated beside the rail-

road, on the slope west of the Railway line, overlooking the Kāla Shrine. The three Prangs are in laterite and sandstone and are adorned with stucco. According to Prince Subhadradis Diskul these were built probably as a Buddhist sanctuary. The Bulletin of the Lopburi Tourist Organization Centre, however, calls it a Hindu Shrine. Prince Diskul mentions the existence of the base of a Buddha image in the Central Prang. The Centre's Bulletin, however, says that 'there is a platform...where the holy symbol of Hinduism, the linga, had been placed there'. Since no images are found in the Prangs now, only the bases are left, it is all a guess work as to what images would have been there. Circumstantial evidence, however, leads us to agree with the Centre's view that they are a Hindu monuments. The architecture is apiece with the Hindu Khmer temples elsewhere, such as the ones at Pimai, Panom Rung and Muang-tam. The carvings on the outer sides of the Prangs carry figures of the Hindu deities. The carving of the front side in the southern direction depicts in all probability Kārttikeya seated on a peacock with knees raised and the hands joined, holding something which is leaning towards the right hand. Straight up this figure is a figure which is highly indistinct. It could be the figure of Yama on buffalo. By the side of the Kārttikeya figure are two other clear figures, one to the east and the other to the southeast, in standing posture most probably of ladies. Towards the east on this Prang is the figure of Indra on an elephant with three heads. Indra is shown holding something in hand which goes right up to the shoulder.

On the Middle Prang facing the east are two figures : upper, Indra on an elephant with three heads, lower, only the elephant with three heads ; probably the figure of Indra on it got broken. On this very Prang facing the north is a very

interesting figure. From a distance it looks like that of Hanumān flying in the sky but looked at from close quarters it turns out to be entirely different. It is the figure of a man, head broken, riding a man. The man carrying the human load is in a flying posture with front knee bent and the back leg hanging with the knee bending down. One leg of the man on top is coiled under the arm of the one carrying him, while the other is on his arm. In one of the hands the riding man carries something looking like a club. The hands of the man lifted are shown falling on the legs. Evidently the figure is that of Kubera who is described in mythology as Naravāhana, nara, a man, as his vehicle. The club also goes very well with him.

On this very Prang facing the south is a figure, with broken head, on a buffalo with three heads in the Lalitāsana posture, with one knee slightly raised and the other flat, left arm at the waist, the right holding something which could be a club. On all counts it seems to depict Yama.

Western side of the Middle Prang has a figure on a vehicle with three heads in the Lalitāsana posture holding something like a club in hand. Towards the right side of it is a figure which appears to be that of Hamsa, swan. In all probability the figure represents Varuṇa. What he holds in hand goes right up to the shoulder.

On the eastern side, First Prang, much below Indra there is a figure in meditation with head broken. It could be the Buddha in basrelief.

The figures on the Prangs according to the direction in which they were put would give the impression of their being those of the presiding deities of the quarters. Facing the east is Indra, the west is Varuṇa, the south is Yama and the north

is Kubera. These precisely are the deities presiding over the said quarters. One peculiarity which cannot go unnoticed here is in the figure of Kārttikeya on peacock on the First Prang facing the south. In Indian mythology the deity under reference is not associated with any particular quarter. Since the figures of all the four deities, Indra, Varuṇa, Yama and Kubera as the presiding deities of the east, the west, the south and the north are already there, there is no need actually for the figure of Kārttikeya as he presiding deity of the south. It could well be that he was put there as the guardian deity of the whole shrine.

The architectural style of the Prangs would point to their having been constructed in the reign of King Jayavarmman VII. Since Jayavarmman VII was a Buddhist, it was presumed that the shrine must be the Buddhist one. Since Avalokiteśvara is in the middle of the Buddha forms, the Middle Prang was supposed to have his image.

The door columns of the Prangs are in stone. On the first Prang at the base are carved figures of seated hermits Ṛṣis exactly in the same style as found at Panom Rung, with knees raised and the hands tucked at the cheeks. The outer part of the Prangs must have been decorated with beautiful designs some of which are still visible.

Towards the main sanctuary lies a Vihāra built in the reign of King Narai (1656-1688) which has a large Buddha image in Ayudhya style in posture of meditation.

The Sam Yod, the three Prangs were restored by the Royal Institute in 1926 and were fenced later by the Fine Arts Department.

Hindu Shrine

Called in Thai Prang Khaek, it lies towards the northeast

of the Royal Palace. It is in the form of three Prangs, like the Sam Yod, the middle one bigger than the other two, made of brick with plaster worn off. They are specimens of beautiful Khmer architecture belonging probably to the 10th-11th Cen. A.D. They were probably restored during the period of King Narai. There is a base for the deity image in the Middle Prang. In front of this monument are found the remains of another later Hindu shrine. To the south of it is a brick tank for water supply to the south of which still lies a terra cotta pipe. The later Hindu shrine and the water tank were probably later additions of the time of King Narai.

Wat Phra Sri Ratana Mahathat

It is a large deserted Wat behind the Railway Station towards the southwest. Built probably in the 12th Cen. A.D. when the Khmers were still powerful, the Wat had probably three Prangs surrounded by galleries. At the moment only one of these, the Central one, with remains of beautiful designs on its exterior, is found. A Vihāra and a Pavillion in front of it were added during the reign of King Narai. Restored several times in the reigns of Kings Ramesuan, Maha Chakraphat, Narai and Borom Kot the Wat has in its sprawling compound a number of Chedis and Prangs decorated with exquisite stucco designs.

Lak Muang or an auspicious pole

It is near the Phra Rama Road, west of the Royal Reception House. It seems to have been as old as the city of Lopburi itself. A legend connects it with the Rāma story. It is said that after Rāvaṇa's death Rāma wanted to reward Hanumān by building a town for him. He shot an arrow into the sky. The idea was that wherever the arrow would fall he would build the city. The arrow fell at Lopburi which was a hill at that time and changed it into a plain. The monkey

general Hanumān followed the magic arrow. When he saw the arrow falling and the hill crashing into a plain, he came down and wiped the earth with his tail. Indra sent his engineer Viśvakarmā to lay the city. When laid, it was named by Rāma Lavapurī after his second son Lava. It is this Lavapurī which due to phonetic change became Lopburi.

The earth touched by Rāma's arrow is said to have been turned into chalk which incidentally constitutes the principal export of Lopburi. The arrow, Lak Muang, was green in colour. People considering it auspicious broke it into pieces and carried it away, practically every bit of it. Subsequently a shrine was built over it. Whatever of it might have been left lies buried underneath it.

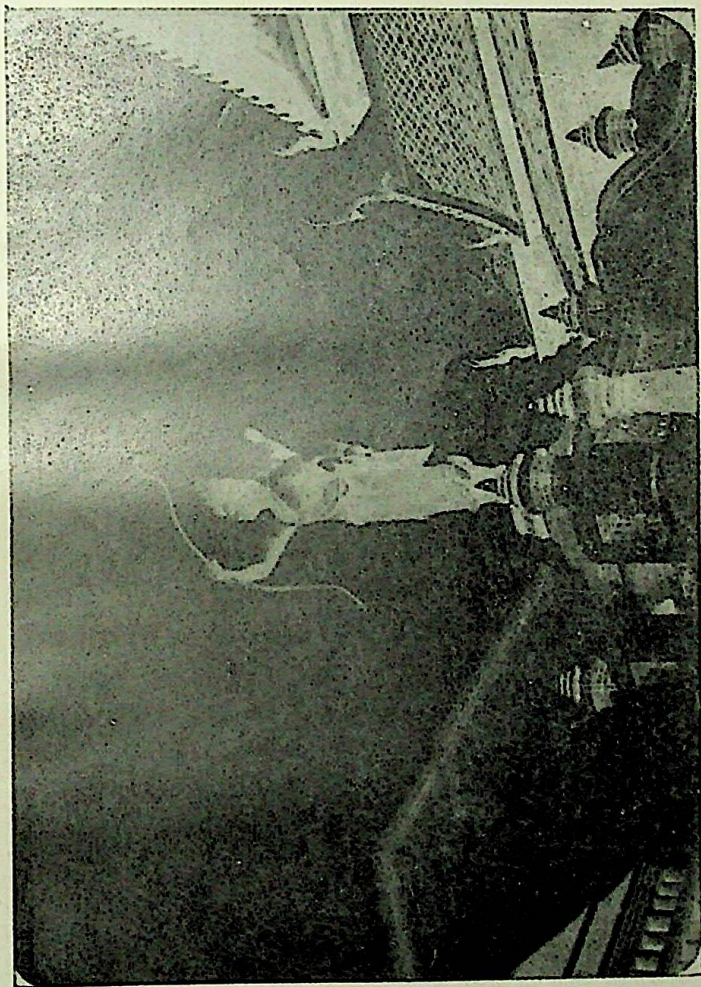
Narai Ratcha Niwet Palace

It is now the National Museum of Lopburi. Every pavillion in it has an interesting history. The Fine Arts Department of the Govt. has published separately a pamphlet on it which gives its detailed description.

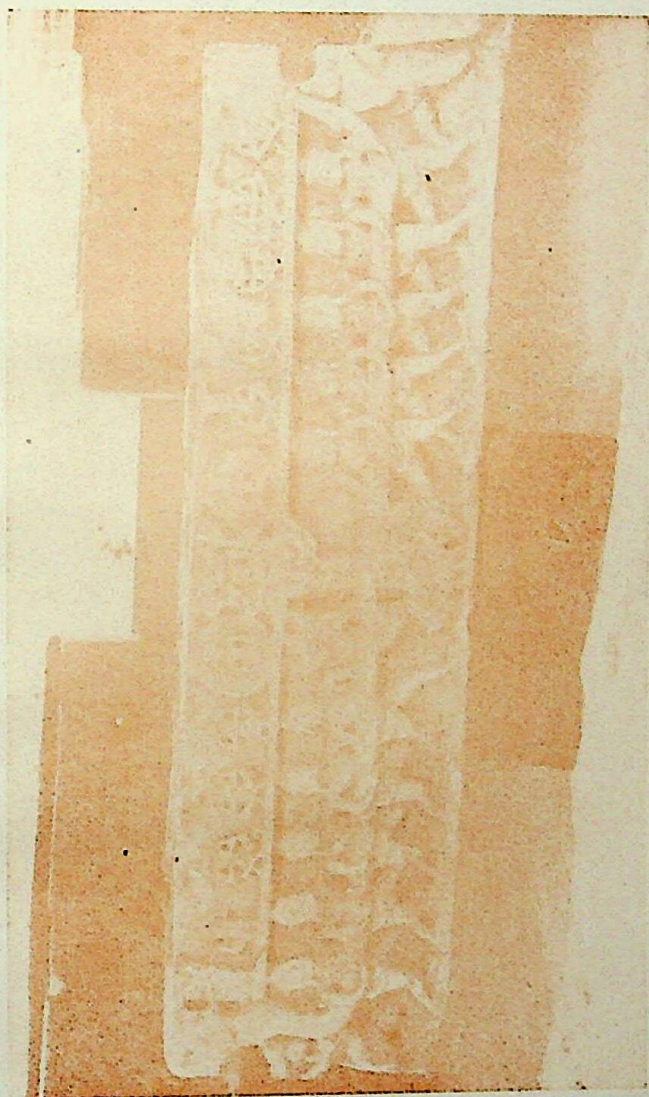
Conclusion

Lopburi is a place most interesting culturally and historically. In some period of history some Hindus from India must have come and settled here as can be surmised from such terms as Khaek Song, Khaek means guest in Thai. The immigrant Hindus in Thailand were and are still called by this term. The music of the Hindu settlers must have appealed to Thai ears and they must have thought fit to incorporate it in their melodies but to perpetuate the memory of their imbibing it from the Hindu settlers, continued to call it by their name, particularly in Lopburi.

With the worship of Nārāyaṇa, Viśṇu, still a living tradition in it, Lopburi stands unique among the older cities of Thailand.



The image of Śrī Rāma in the open in the National Museum, Bangkok.



The churning of the Milk Ocean, : Museum, Prasad Hin Pinal



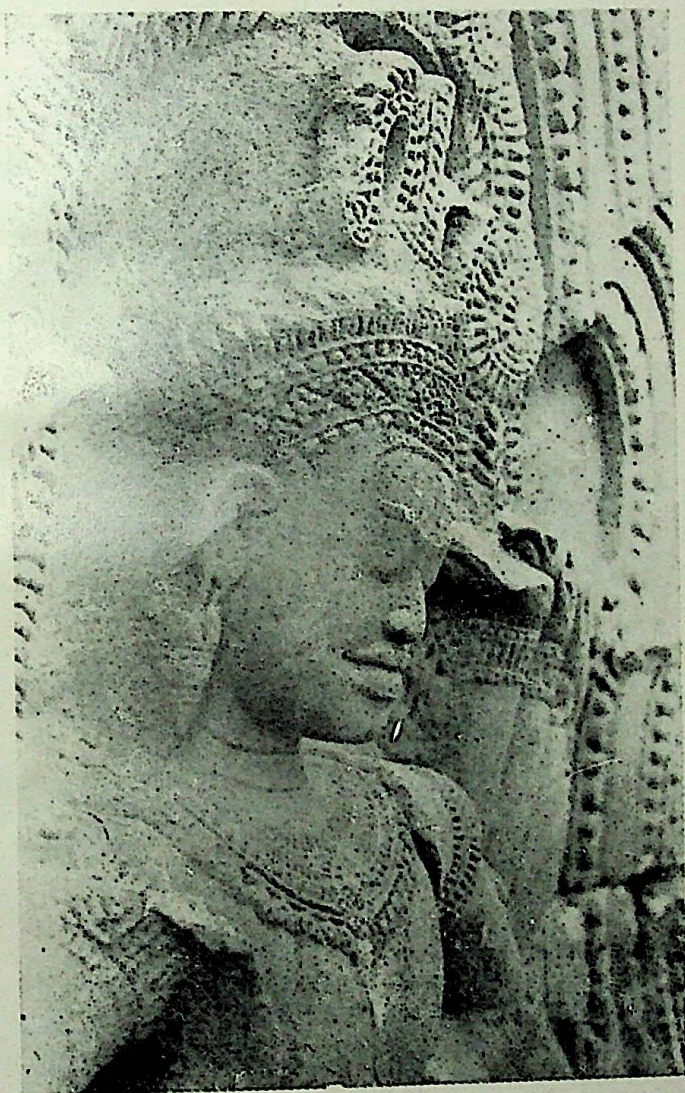
The Suppression of Caṇūra by Kṛṣṇa : Prasad Hīn Pīmai



Kubera on Gajasimha : on a stone slab lying
in the open : Prasad Panom Rung



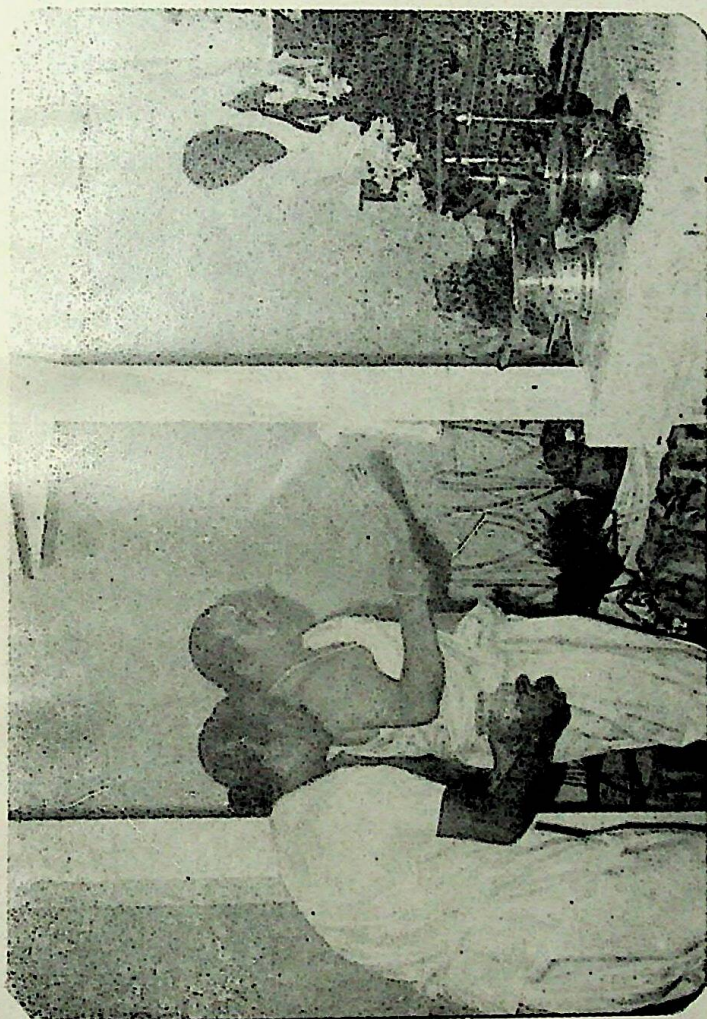
Suppression of Kaliya : Prasad Ban Pluang



The head of Siva : Prasad Panom Rung



Rāvaṇa abducting Sītā : I rasad Panom Rung



The late Rājaguru Vāmadeva Muni performing
the Pūjā in the Brahmin Temple, Bangkok



San Phra Kal : Sālā Vara (=Sri) Kāla
The Viṣṇu Temple of Lopburi

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